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# **Heroes of All Time**

**GEORGE WASHINGTON**



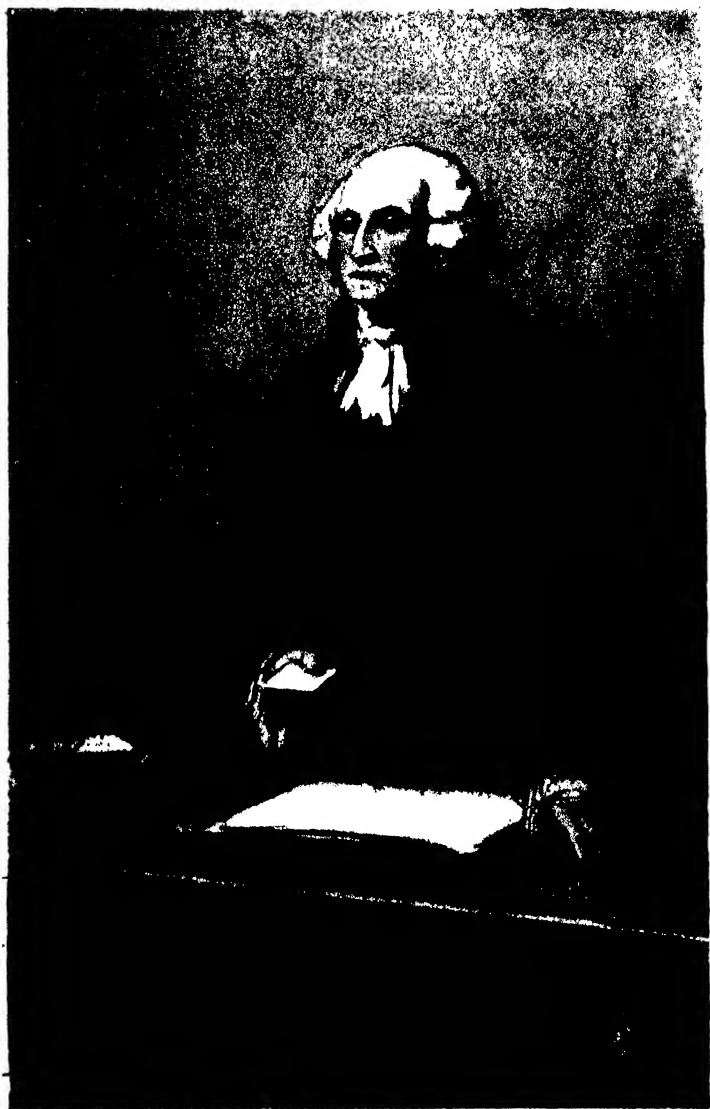
# HEROES OF ALL TIME

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# GEORGE WASHINGTON

*BY*

ADA RUSSELL M.A. (VICT.)

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'ALEXANDER THE GREAT' 'JULIUS CESAR' ETC.

CONTRIBUTOR TO

'THE VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTIES OF ENGLAND'

*WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS*



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## *Introduction*

Our story, which is a little that of the United States as well as a short history of the life of George Washington, begins in the fifteenth century with the great ancestor, Columbus, and with the great fifteenth century movement which Columbus represented—the Renaissance.

‘Renaissance,’ as I suppose all of my readers will know, means literally, ‘Re-birth,’ and the rebirth which took place in Europe in the fifteenth century was the rebirth of civilisation after the centuries known to History as the ‘Dark Ages’ and the ‘Middle Ages.’ Our modern nations were all formed by tribes of barbarians who overran and destroyed the Roman Empire, although to all who came into contact with her, Rome gave traditions of arts and laws that they never wholly lost in their darkest days. Our barbarous ancestors absorbed all they could understand of her institutions and built up systems of law and government and religion, invented styles of architecture and painting that became truly decorative, and developed popular literatures that we still treasure.

What was chiefly lacking in this medieval civilisation, for it became a distinct and mature civilisation, was breadth and freedom, the grace and repose of the classical world, the liberty and freshness of a wide outlook. The stained-glass windows of the Gothic

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cathedral are the best type of the medieval mind—it shut out with figures of great beauty the free spaces of the universe. It sought to enclose the mind in narrow bounds, and it stifled original thought and discovery.

Another thing that came to an end with Rome was the idea of Democracy. The States of antiquity evolved an ideal of self-government that returned to the world with the Renaissance, although it did not begin to bear its full fruit until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Greece (from whom Rome had taken up the torch of civilisation) had created in Athens the perfect Democratic State, and her thinkers, Aristotle and Plato, wove political theories that all scientific revolutionaries have pondered over ever since the Renaissance. She set up for imitation the perfect Republic. Rome never in real fact possessed a perfect Republic, but after Cæsar overthrew her democratic institutions by crossing the Rubicon, she always looked back to them with a wistful reverence, and the heroic struggle of her aristocrats against Cæsar helped to create in the minds of men and bequeath to History a noble, ideal Rome, mother of freemen. This ideal Rome men were to find again at the Renaissance and it was to have an incalculable influence on all later political movements.

Politics, history, art, literature, geography, commerce, discovery, were all changed in scope and outlook by this movement, which ended the Middle Ages and started the modern world.

The means by which the great changes were worked were partly the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 and the consequent flight of

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Greek scholars from that famous old Greek city to havens of refuge in the West of Europe. Italy benefited first, and she was at that moment ripe for the new thought and knowledge, as already her literary men, her Dante and Boccaccio, had soaked themselves in all that was left of the Latin classics; and she received the Greek scholars in one of those waves of literary enthusiasm that leave a permanent mark on the thought of a nation. From Italy this enthusiasm spread all over the world.

For us the chief points of interest in this movement are the attention that was now paid to Greek geographers, which led to the discovery of America; and the revival of interest in republican institutions which led to the foundation of the United States.

When the movement of the Renaissance first began to spread over Europe, the various nations of that continent were beginning to range themselves under strong monarchies, and the tendency was for those monarchies to become despotisms. These despotisms were a need of the times, as the alternative was anarchy and the thousand petty despotisms of the nobles. Thus we have the Tudor despotism in England and the Bourbon despotism in France, but already the nobles were reading Plutarch's lives of the famous Greeks and Romans and forming secret ideals of a State governed by aristocrats, like Rome in Cicero's time. The first-fruits of this were the 'Fronde' in France and the rebellion against the Stuarts in Great Britain, which resulted before the end of the seventeenth century in the establishment of a Whig aristocratical Government not unlike that of the great Roman republic. In France in the seven-

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teenth century Louis XIV and Mazarin put an end to the Fronde and Louis could make with truth the famous assertion: 'The State? I am the State!' but before his death Plutarch's *Lives* had come out again, and the Memoirs of the heroes of the Fronde were to be found on great ladies' dressing-tables. Republican ideals were in the air at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and they were republican ideals drawn straight from classical antiquity. Political theories were to go on fermenting in France until the outbreak of the French Revolution at the close of the century, but, before the great French upheaval came, French and British ideas floating across the Atlantic were to give birth to that new nation, the United States.

So we come to the eighteenth century, and with the eighteenth century we are in the midst of the flowering of all the republican ideas introduced by the Renaissance. At its beginning Louis XIV was still on the throne of France, but before it closes the Bastille will have fallen and the Americans in the name of the 'Rights of Man' will have signed the Declaration of Independence.

The individualism introduced by the Renaissance influenced the sixteenth century, but in religion, not in politics. It produced the Reformation, and this had a very important effect on the politics of the future by setting a man's conscience above both Church and State. This was seen to the full in the seventeenth century, but that century produced only one eminent man who formed a really popular view of government, Hobbes, the author of the *Leviathan*, a book setting forth the theory that all government

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was derived from an original contract between sovereign and people for the benefit of the latter. The *Leviathan* appeared during the Commonwealth, and in the height of royalist reaction under the Stuart restoration it was considered a very wicked book, not fit for the good citizen to read. Hobbes' theory, however, was revived in the eighteenth century by Rousseau, the father of the French Revolution, in his *Contrat Social*, and was the basis of the American Declaration of Independence.

Of all periods of history which can help us in our present political needs, the eighteenth century is the most useful, as the ideas and ideals which are to the fore in the life of the nations of the world to-day first sprang up then, in what we may call 'political quantities,' in our modern life. For the first time in modern history we get a full statement by two nations—America and France—of the idea of social and political equality, and men first began to criticise the 'Powers that Be' in a dangerous way. It was the beginning of the Age of the 'Rights of Man,' and we are not yet out of that age. Literary and intellectual people in France, Spain, Italy, England, Sweden, even Prussia and Russia, were not only busy creating Utopias, but were possessed with the longing to change the whole face of political life. Voltaire raised the first voice against the wars of political aggression that have always been the main fact of history, and his profound irony and polished epigrams were read with delight the whole world over by educated people. No amount of direct hard hitting could so have discredited the governments of his time when war was played by

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States like chess, for the amusement, satisfaction, and gain of noble families, and the common people were only looked on in the light of soldiers or servants, or 'pawns.' A new idea that came to the fore in the eighteenth century was that there were no common people. This idea, once it was born, acted like dynamite on social institutions. Voltaire wrote only for the literary classes, but Rousseau made the new idea a religion that appealed also to statesmen and ordinary people, and Beaumarchais placed plays and operas on the stage—like the *Marriage of Figaro*—telling the world at large that there is no more evil thing under the sun than 'a great noble who is a wicked man.' The sole virtue of the typical nobleman was that he had given himself the trouble to be born—'*Vous vous êtes donné la peine de naître, et rien de plus.*'

Most of you will have seen Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro* as an opera, and you may have been told what Napoleon said of it—that it was the French Revolution in action. The author himself relates the outcry against it; it offended, his enemies said, 'Religion, government, all ranks of society, and morality; virtue was oppressed and vice reigned triumphant.' You will probably have been surprised that a piece which seems to you so harmless should have created such an uproar, but it is one of the most important literary productions of the age, as it expressed so clearly the new dangerous doctrines. The theatre was guarded on the day of the representation; society ladies, always the first in France under the 'Old Régime' to take up with new ideas, went early in the morning and sat patiently in their

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seats until the performance began; and at night people dispersed the guards, forced the doors, and broke down the wickets to get in. Its great doctrine, very skilfully clothed and disguised, is that noble birth does not make a man any better than his neighbours; and it further claims a certain private liberty of judgment for the common people. Beaumarchais had to explain away carefully a saying of Figaro about war: 'Are we soldiers that we should kill and be killed for interests we are ignorant of?'

The Declaration of Independence, which is the political creed of American democracy, contains the practical British war-cry of, 'No taxation without representation,' and it also contains the intoxication of the new gospel of eighteenth century France: 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity!' Most people to-day think that equality is neither possible nor desirable; but Fraternity we hope that we shall have always with us, and no man can live without Liberty. Acting on these ideals, partly French and partly British, America carried out the first and most successful of attempts to 'make the world safe for democracy.'



*"No calmative of sleep or sage  
Can cure the fever to be free!"*

JOHN MASEFIELD

## CHAPTER I: *The Ancestors*

**B**EFORE beginning our story of the eighteenth century and its great movements, which will centre in our hero George Washington, we must go briefly over the history of the rise and growth of the British colonies in North America,—to what President Wilson has called the ‘swarming of the English.’

The thirteenth century A.D. saw the beginnings of that rich eastern commerce which was the dream and prize of the medieval merchant and made cities like Venice and Genoa so great and prosperous; but hardly had the riches of the Orient begun to pour into Europe than the growing power of the Turks made the land routes to Asia almost impracticable. However, the invention of the mariners’ compass in the fourteenth century made long sea-voyages possible, and the idea became stronger and stronger that Asia could be reached by sea.

As only a few of the most enlightened people seriously entertained the notion that the earth was spherical in form, the first schemes were directed to the possible route round Africa, for although no one knew the extent of Africa to the south there was a very strong belief that it came to an end somewhere.

Prince Henry ‘the Navigator’ of Portugal, therefore, an illustrious prince whose knowledge and enterprise raised Portugal to a leading position in the

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scientific world, gathered together experienced mariners, founded a naval college and an observatory, and fitted out expeditions for exploring the African coast.

All sailors with dreams of adventure and all sea-captains who desired to share in the profitable trade with Asia, wandered to Lisbon, and thither came among the rest the famous Genoese mariner, Christopher Columbus, the ancestor of American civilisation.

Prince Henry the Navigator unfortunately never saw the reward of his toil and faith, dying in 1473, before the great discoveries, for not until 1487 did Bartholomew Diaz round the Cape of Good Hope, and so find the long-hoped-for path to Asia by the eastern seas, and not until 1492 did Columbus set sail for the West.

Columbus had no idea of following in the steps of the Portuguese pioneers. Devoted all his life to the study of geography, in the intervals of his sea-faring he read ancient Greek geographical writers and became inspired with the belief that to him Providence had reserved the greatest of all geographical discoveries, the proof of the sphericity of the globe; and if the earth were indeed spherical in shape he believed that by sailing west he must necessarily reach Asia, for that another great continent lay between Europe and Asia did not even enter his head. Now that Prince Henry was dead he could expect no help from the Portuguese sovereign, and he tried in turn all the kings of Europe, and at last obtained the assistance of the Spanish crown. He set sail therefore on 3d August, 1492, and on 11th October landed on the Bahamas, which he

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named the West Indies. His discovery aroused eager enthusiasm in Spain, who was not slow to follow up her fortunate enterprise, and within twenty-seven years from his first departure from Spain the eastern shores of South and Central America had been explored by Spaniards, nearly to the southern tip of the continent.

Spain founded a mighty empire in Central and Southern America, and she was such a powerful nation that it seemed to all men a miracle when England was able to maintain her independence against her in the sixteenth century. It was indeed almost an impertinence for England to oppose her power, but from the time England became a Protestant country she hated Spain bitterly, and she resented her monopoly of the New World, whither English mariners were longing to sail treasure-hunting and adventure-seeking. A little crew of Bristol sailors planted the English flag in Newfoundland in 1497, but there was no public interest in this colony, and Canada for the moment passed to the French, who also colonised Louisiana, to the south. It was necessary for England to make haste if she was to obtain any part in the rich heritage which had fallen so unexpectedly to the old countries of Europe.

So one hundred years after Columbus attempted to put into execution his dreams, Frobisher set out on the same errand. He was followed by the famous unfortunate hero Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and to fight Spain and found American colonies was the twin ambition of all Elizabethan sailors. The soldier-poet Sir Walter Raleigh was haunted by these ambitions and he projected the plantation on the Atlantic

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seaboard which was called 'Virginia' after the Virgin Queen Elizabeth, and consolidated under James I. Virginia, the home of Washington and many another of America's future statesmen, was thus the first of the English colonies, and it always had different traditions from the States that were founded subsequently. It had, strangely enough, no traditions of revolt, religious or political, and as it was afterward to lead the others in rebellion, so now it led them in politeness and the arts, in obedience to the Mother Country and the Established Church and Crown.

Then came various instalments of religious refugees. When the Stuarts came to the throne of England in 1603 they found that bodies of all shades and shapes of religious opinion were hoping for their acceptance and support, and only waiting until stern Elizabeth, who suppressed both Roman Catholics and Non-conformists, should have died. To their dismay, James I continued the policy of Queen Elizabeth. He had learned in Scotland to dislike the Presbyterians, who had little respect for royalty—they called him 'God's silly vassal'—and he used to say 'No bishop, no King.' So when the Pilgrim Fathers, who had fled from the Elizabethan régime to Holland, found that conditions were not improved under James, they set sail in the 'Mayflower' for the New World. 'We are well weaned from the delicate milk of the mother country,' wrote one of their ministers, 'and inured to the difficulties of a strange land. The people are industrious and frugal. We are knit together as a body in a most sacred covenant of the Lord, of the violation whereof we make great

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conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves strictly tied to all care of each other's good and of the whole.' They landed in 1620 on the coast of Massachusetts, and soon the colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and Rhode Island, and later New Hampshire and Maine, represented 'New England.' As the Lincolnshire Boston had helped to fit out one of these Puritan emigrations, the name of Boston was given to that famous New England town, the capital of Massachusetts.

James I disliked the Roman Catholics less than the Puritans, and so he very readily granted to a Catholic nobleman, Lord Baltimore, the permission to found a Roman Catholic colony in America. Charles I granted it a royal charter and it was incorporated under the name of Maryland, after Queen Henrietta Maria. Here religious liberty first flourished, for in English colonies Roman Catholics dared not persecute Protestants, and the State religion being Roman Catholic, Protestants could not persecute Roman Catholics.

You will all have heard of the 'Laudian persecution' in the Church of England at home. Under the influence of Laud and with the approbation of Charles I, the Church of England drew immeasurably away from Puritanism. Ritual and ceremony, moot points for so long after the Reformation and throughout the sixteenth century, were enforced rigorously, and Puritan usages, including the strict observance of the Sabbath Day and the marriage of priests, were discouraged. The immediate consequence was the emigration of thousands of Puritans to the New World.

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Thus, long before the new ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity came over to America from France, there was a set of colonies founded by people who had given up home and kith and kin for the sake of freedom of faith, people who were willing to give up life itself for their idea of duty and what they conceived were their rights.

In the latter half of the seventeenth century, the English colonies were added to by the Dutch wars. Between Maryland and New England there was a Swedish colony which subsequently became Dutch, with a capital—New Amsterdam. By the treaty with Holland which Charles II made, this colony was handed over to Britain and New Amsterdam received the title of the King's brother, the Duke of York, being called New York. Delaware was ceded by the Dutch at the same time, and Britain also made good her claim to the small colony of New Jersey. New York, like Virginia, had no peculiar religious traditions, and her history, like that of Virginia, always shows this.

A further Puritan colony was that of Pennsylvania, founded by William Penn especially for Quakers (but granting religious toleration to all), under James II; and in the same reign the colony of Carolina, called after Charles II, who had granted its charter, was established to the South of Virginia. Carolina obtained its population chiefly from emigrations from Ireland of Ulster men, and to these emigrations the population of Georgia, to the west, was also chiefly due; and so two States sprang up in the South quite different from the Virginian type, now the old aristocracy of the colonies.

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These colonies thus came to occupy a large, compact stretch of territory on the Atlantic coast, stretching for over 1,000 miles between Spanish Florida on the South and French Canada on the North. They prospered in the most marvellous fashion, and in the middle of the century following that of their formation Burke said they seemed to him:

'Rather ancient nations grown to perfection through a long series of fortunate events and a train of successful industry, accumulating wealth in many centuries, than the colonies of yesterday; than a set of miserable outcasts, a few years ago, not so much sent as thrown out on the bleak and desert shore of a barren wilderness, three thousand miles from all civilised intercourse.'

Talking of one Lord Bathurst, he was, says Burke, in 1704 of an age to be made to comprehend such things, and 'Suppose . . . that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most amiable, as he is one of the most fortunate men of his age, had opened to him in vision that when, in the fourth generation, the third prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which . . . was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to a higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one. If amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain and unfolded the rising glories of his country and, whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck scarce visible in the mass of the national interest . . . and should tell him: "Young man, there is America," which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world!'

In the warm regions of the South, cotton and tobacco were grown, largely by slave labour. These, by the 'Navigation Laws,' might only be exported to British possessions and constituted the chief



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part of the commercial riches of Britain. The raw cotton exported to Lancashire inaugurated the commercial greatness of that county and so exercised an important influence on English life then and ever afterward. To work the tobacco and cotton plantations of the South, slaves were imported in large numbers and a slave trade, common to both North and South, developed and became almost a rival to tobacco and cotton as a mercantile item. The new ideas of the rights of man made people examine their consciences, and a very strong minority began to look upon slavery as a social evil; but profit and conscience had a hard struggle and for a long time profit won the day. Carrying slaves and the products of the Southern plantations, a brisk transport business sprang up in New England, but for the most part agriculture and cattle-rearing were the staple industries of the Northern colonies.

Each colony was governed after the fashion at Home, by three Estates—Governor, representing the King; senators; and a popular element in the House of Burgesses. Where the Governor, as often happened, had great ideas of the royal prerogative and his own dignity, he often, before there was any idea of revolt from England at large, got across the House of Burgesses and even the local Senates. The Board of Trade at Home received by almost every mail from some of the colonies reams of complaints by the Governor of the impertinence to which he was subjected and reams of representations from the colonists against the conduct of the Governor. It is impossible not to feel on reading these papers, still unpublished in the archives of the Public

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Record Office, that, long before the American Revolution, American Pymys and Hampdens were collecting their arguments, polishing their grievances and fretting at their subjection to institutions entirely alien to their inherent tastes and trend of mind.

As a social institution, the Governor was well-liked in an aristocratic State like Virginia, where social life in the eighteenth century resembled very much that of England at the same period. He made a centre for polite life, and his position made a hierarchy of social precedence possible. The carriages of the local gentry, like the Lees and Washingtons, with liveried servants in the English manner, would drive into Williamsburg or Annapolis (in Maryland) of a winter evening, and ladies in enormous crinolines and tower-like head-dresses would step out on to the red carpet and trip up the steps of big houses under an awning, while the sounds of a gay band would issue; and the gentlemen in knee-breeches, silken hose, silver-buckled shoon, gaily coloured coats, frilled ruffles and powdered wigs, would hand them out of their carriages and lead them to the ballroom and dance with them the stately minuet, even as their brothers and cousins at Home were doing in London, Bath or Wells.

But there was very little of such aristocratic life in the colonies. Indeed, it was confined to the big planter colonies and to large towns like New York. Elsewhere, the Governor conflicted with popular institutions and tastes, as representative of class distinctions and privileges of birth and rank that the New World was already conscious of a wish to abolish.

## CHAPTER II: *The Rebel's Childhood*

**G**EORGE WASHINGTON was descended from an old planter family of Virginia, who had left England under the Commonwealth, and so had the reverse of republican ancestry. His ancestors indeed departed from the Old Country a few years after the execution of Charles I, full of sorrow and indignation at that act.

They belonged to an old English family, undistinguished on the whole, but occasionally producing some notable person. Their chief seat was at Sulgrave in Northamptonshire, where stained glass and a few ancient brasses still preserve their name and arms. Sir Henry Washington fought for Charles I in the Civil War and showed some of the qualities of soldier and ruler that George afterward possessed. The Washingtons found England neither a safe nor pleasant place under the Puritan Commonwealth, and set sail in 1657 for Virginia, the loyal Church of England colony, where they could preserve in safety their loyalty and their religion. John and Lawrence, the uncles of Sir Henry, were the founders. They purchased lands on the west bank of the Potomac River, built a house there, and continued to live, so far as changed conditions permitted it, the life of English country gentlemen. The elder of the two

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brothers, Colonel John Washington, great-grandfather of George, stands out as a wealthy planter and pioneer in Indian warfare, for in the border States Indian warfare was a constant feature. He removed the seat of his family to Bridges Creek, a short distance from the Potomac. His elder son Lawrence had three children—among them Augustine, father of George. Augustine was twice married and had a good many children, of whom George was the eldest by the second wife.

(George Washington, the future President of the United States, was born on the 22d February, 1732, at Bridges Creek in the house built by his great-grandfather, Colonel John Washington, of which not a stone remains to-day. A simple inscription only tells that it was the birthplace of Washington.

When he was about five years old his family left this house for another at the banks of the Rappahannock, a mighty river neighbouring Indian territory and hitherto navigated chiefly by the Indian's light canoe. It was bordered by primeval forests and represented the boundary of British civilisation as extended by the Washingtons and other big planters. Here Washington grew up and learned gradually to manage estates and deal prudently with a vast overseas commerce, for his family like their fellow planters shipped their own goods to Great Britain without the help of the shipping agencies. Here he studied the social and political life of his colony and took his part in its festivities, learning to ride, fish, hunt, and to protect himself against Indians. Part of his training was how to tame exuberant nature, and another part, and not the least important, was to

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face the bravest and most skilful foes the white man has ever met in his wanderings—the Redskins. In the border colonies there was a continual danger of Indian raids, of villages and farms being set on fire and the inhabitants scalped.

George played at Redskins at a period when they were still prowling round the White Man's settlements and stalking him, and in his teens he sat in their tents and watched their war-dances and heard their grim songs. When he was very small he played at soldiers, having a set of toy grenadiers, and he would assemble the negro children on his father's plantation and drill them like a martinet. He never dreamed of any other career for himself than that of a soldier.)

His half-brother Lawrence, eldest son and heir, was sent to England to be educated. Having received the best instruction 'Home' (as the colonists still called the Old Country) could give, he returned to America to receive a commission as captain in His Britannic Majesty's Army, and served with distinction under Admiral Vernon against Spain. The excitement of George knew no bounds when he heard of his brother's doings and promotion.

Being a younger son, he was not sent to the Old Country for his education. However, he learned 'what's what' from Lawrence, who took great pains with him, and carefully observed the manners and ways of the English gentlemen and distinguished colonials he met from time to time. Lord Fairfax, a typical eighteenth century English gentleman, a great sportsman and yet a patron of the arts—even himself a contributor to that quintessence of intel-

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lectual England, 'The Spectator'—had wide estates in these parts and was on the most intimate terms with the Washingtons. It was astonishing, however, how little Americans really learned from eighteenth century England. They picked up her amusements and fashions in dress and furniture, but they were almost proof against her intellectual outlook at that time. The eighteenth century is one on which Britons may well look back with pride in almost every direction. England had built up a great commercial empire; she had established what for the time was a model system of government at home; and she had a constellation of famous literary men whose works are still among the chief treasures of the race. But the literature produced at that time dealt largely in epigram and irony and could only have been produced and appreciated by a highly artificial society. It was full of humour and scholarship, and sparkled with wit, but it seemed to Americans to be too far removed from life. It incited to no high ideals or noble conduct; it made little appeal to the passions; it had no 'heart.' There was therefore between Great Britain and her colonies no intellectual bond which should endear her to them. Literary sympathy is often the best conductor of liking between nation and nation, and this literary sympathy in that age America found more in France than in England.

For good or for evil, George Washington never had the slightest touch of the literary spirit of eighteenth century England, and there is nothing to make us suppose that he had the slightest sense of humour. His character was formed to greater issues, and he

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was perhaps fortunate in escaping from the cynical, ironical spirit that nearly became a plague in eighteenth century life at Home. In all other respects he grew up to the height of the age as a perfect gentleman, wise, sensible, straightforward, magnanimous, courteous, charitable, obstinate, patient, strong in every way; and the wonderful thing about him is that he showed most of these qualities almost as soon as he could speak. He was tall and handsome; he excelled every other boy in all manly games; and a place is still shown where he threw a stone across the Rappahannock at the lower ferry; he ran like a deer, he leapt like a cat; he could tame a wild horse like Alexander, and wrestle without a peer. His parents took more than ordinary pains that their children should be straightforward, truthful and religious.

Among many famous stories of George and his father, the only one I can be sure that every reader will have heard of is that of the Lie, and as none of you like this story—because nice people do not generally say that they ‘cannot tell a lie’—I am glad to be able to tell you that it is almost certainly false. The beautiful English cherry-tree spoiled by the toy hatchet has gone with the little boy who could not tell a lie to the land where nearly every other tale of Washington’s childhood has fled. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, it was never a very truthful tale itself. The Hatchet of History has been applied mercilessly to the fertile legend of Washington’s childhood and has left us literally nothing in the way of anecdote.

( When he was five years old he was sent to the

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school of the village sexton, one Hobby, although his father remarked that 'a bright boy will run Hobby dry in two or three years' } and although Hobby might claim in later years to have laid the foundations of Washington's greatness, it is plain that the boy learned at home what was most valuable to him—the Scriptures, stories of history, and the description of other countries. He had little of the scholar in his disposition, and through lack of opportunity he never learned any foreign tongue, not even French. Legend says that both in the school and in the playground he was a model boy. (From Hobby's hands he passed to the school of one Mr. Williams, the best teacher to be found in Virginia, and went in especially for the study of arithmetic, book-keeping and surveying, as it was thought that these subjects would be most useful to him as a planter.

At thirteen he was already a man in stature and maturity of character, and had already drawn up sets of legal and commercial forms that he thought would be useful to him. His experience in making this 'Book of Forms,' still preserved, 'gave him,' says his biographer, Washington Irving, 'throughout life a lawyer's skill in draughting documents, and a merchant's exactness in keeping accounts; so that all the concerns of his various estates, his dealings with his domestic stewards and foreign agents, his accounts with Governments, and all the financial transactions to this day are to be seen posted up in books, in his own handwriting, monuments of his method and unvaried accuracy.' He mapped and measured the farms near the school as if he were a



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professional surveyor. He also wrote out 'Rules of Behaviour in Company and Conversation'—110 of them—such as:

'Sleep not when others speak; sit not when others stand; speak not when you should hold your peace; walk not when others stop.'

'Break not a jest where none take pleasure in mirth; laugh not aloud nor at all without occasion; deride no man's misfortune, though there seem to be some cause.'

'Speak not injurious words, neither in jest nor earnest; scoff at none, although they give occasion.'

'Detract not from others, neither be excessive in commending.'

'Give not advice without being asked; and when desired do it briefly.'

'Reprehend not the imperfections of others; for that belongs to parents, masters and superiors.'

'Be not apt to relate news, if you know not the truth thereof.'

George must have framed these rules on his reading, not on his experience, but the older members of his family agreed that if any one living were capable of carrying them out it was he.

His kind, wise father died shortly before George went to Mr. Williams' school. He was overcome with the most passionate sorrow, for he 'thought the world of his father,' it was said, 'and his father thought the world of him.' Lawrence married one of the Fairfax girls very shortly afterward, and settled on an estate near by, bequeathed him by his father, calling it after his favourite admiral, by the now famous name of Mount Vernon, to be associated in later days with his famous brother. George soon spent all his spare time and holidays here. The estate on the Rappahannock was settled on him.

George was not quite sixteen when he left school for good, and he was already in the throes of his



Washington and his Mother



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first love affair, of which the object was a lady identified by tradition with the future mother of General Henry Lee, one of the heroes of the Revolution. Perhaps he was influenced, as he was very much in everything, by the marriage of Lawrence; anyway he wrote verses to the Lady of his Thoughts, and was very unhappy for an unusually long time. It is an episode without a fellow in a life that was to be romantic indeed, but in a bigger way.

At Mount Vernon, where he met many officers, George, strongly encouraged by Lawrence, once turned his thoughts to the British Navy; a midshipman's warrant was obtained for him and his trunk actually put aboard the man-of-war in the Potomac, when his mother repented and begged him to stay with her. After a sharp struggle, George consented to do so, and so the big man-of-war sailed away with his first ambition as the unknown fair lady sailed away with his first love. Not in vain had his parents taught him obedience and quoted often the grim text:

'The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.'

Washington's mother, unlike his father, lived to see the harvest of the virtues she had so carefully planted, and in the coming days of the American Republic 'the mother of Washington' enjoyed a renown not unlike that of the 'Mother of the Gracchi' under the Roman Republic of old. To the end of her days she maintained her authority over children and household; George still obeyed her when he became President of the United States, and a re-

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lation wrote of the times when the children were young:

'Of the mother I was ten times more afraid than I ever was of my own parents. She awed me in the midst of her kindness, for she was, indeed, truly kind. I have often been present with her sons, proper, tall fellows, too, and we were all as mute as mice; and even now, when time has whitened my locks, and I am grandparent of a second generation, I could not behold that remarkable woman without feelings it is impossible to describe. Whoever has seen that awe-inspiring air and manner so characteristic in the Father of his Country, will remember the matron as she appeared when the presiding genius of her well-ordered household, commanding and being obeyed.'

## CHAPTER III: *The Hero's Life Among the Redskins*

**W**HEN George, not quite sixteen years of age, left school, he went to live at Mount Vernon with Lawrence, already a man of influence and importance, a member of the House of Burgesses of Virginia and Adjutant-General of his district. At Belvoir, not far away, he met the Fairfaxes and became a constant companion of Lord Fairfax in his hunting. Their friendship led to the engagement of George to survey Lord Fairfax's estate and many consequent adventures which all helped to train the young man in hardihood and judgment.

On horseback, with a hunting-knife and tomahawk in his belt, he set out with one of the Fairfaxes and a few servants on a surveying expedition. Sometimes they bivouacked at some Indian campfire, and they depended for food on what they shot or caught—wild turkey or other game—cooking it on forked sticks and eating it off pieces of wood they found suitable for plates. Sometimes they came at night to a squatter's hut. A letter from George to a friend says: 'Since you received my last letter I have not slept above three or four nights in a bed, but after walking a good deal all day I have lain down before the fire upon a little straw, hay, fodder or a

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bear-skin—whichsoever was to be had—with man, wife and children, like dogs and cats; and happy is he who gets the berth nearest the fire. I have never had my clothes off, but have lain and slept in them, except the few nights I have been in Fredericksburg.’ For the first time he saw Indian settlements and wigwams and war-dances and heard their war-whoops. Sometimes they found the settler’s hut too filthy to sleep in; and at the house of one ‘Solomon Hedge, Esq., J. P.,’ where they supped, they were given neither knife nor fork to eat with.

However, this wonderful boy of sixteen was not playing at Boy Scouts; he was professionally engaged to survey a part of Lord Fairfax’s estate, and he carried out his job with thoroughness and success. As a result of his report on the attractiveness of a site, Lord Fairfax shortly afterward moved across the Blue Ridge and established himself in a manor-house he called Greenaway Court, a delightful house of the best eighteenth century type and henceforth a centre of social life in Virginia. Here, it is said, George Washington first read the *History of England*.

George returned to Mount Vernon by the 12th April, 1748. Three years later he was appointed Public Surveyor, and in after years his surveys of land were referred to as though they were legal documents. It is obvious that this practice was the best experience possible for an Army officer who was to be called on to plan campaigns, understand routes and distances and have a profound knowledge of backwoodsmen and Indians. It is sad to recall that the subsequent career of Washington dealt a

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mortal blow to Lord Fairfax, the friend who had given him his first surveying commission.

'Joe!' Lord Fairfax cried to his black servant when nearly thirty years later there came the news of the surrender of Cornwallis and the whole English army, 'Carry me to my bed, for it is high time for me to die.'

When George was nineteen years old, his brother Lawrence retired from the position of Adjutant General of his district and obtained the office for George, who received the rank of Major, with the duty of commanding the militia. Before taking up his new work, he accompanied Lawrence, who had developed consumption, to spend the winter in the West Indies. The holiday failed to restore Lawrence to health, and George caught the small-pox; he recovered speedily, but Lawrence only returned home to die—26th July, 1752, aged thirty-four. He bequeathed the remainder of his estate, on the death of his little daughter, to George, and as the child soon died, Mount Vernon came into George's possession and became his home.

The next important event in his life was the outbreak of war between England and France. We shall give a short account of this war—"The Seven Years' War"—in the next chapter. It did not begin officially until 1756, but for a good many years before that date a state of practical warfare existed, and Washington had his first taste of battle and made the first steps in his military career.

Great Britain and France were, as they have nearly always been since their history began, on very ill terms with each other. They were never



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without subjects of quarrel, but their quarrels were taking an acuter turn than ever through their colonial possessions and their commercial rivalry.

France was busily building strong fortresses which should connect her Canadian possessions in the north with her colony of Louisiana in the south of North America, and so confine the British colonists strictly to the seaboard. She had a traditional claim to the valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio, founded on ancient explorations. In India, too, France and Great Britain were rivals, for through that clerk of genius, Clive, Great Britain had laid the foundations of her Indian Empire.

While the French, without declaring war, sent expeditions to occupy the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi, and claimed all the country west of the Alleghany Mountains, the British formed an 'Ohio Company,' to dispute that valley with the French, and planned the invasion of Canada, where the great struggle was to be fought out. Both countries tried to get the Indians' aid, by means of bribery and diplomacy. Of the series of French forts toward the Mississippi, the chief were Fort Niagara, a fort at the Forks of the Ohio, called Fort Duquesne after the French Governor of Canada, and one at Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. The fighting in the Ohio district brought George Washington into the field. He had now attained his majority and was the head of his family, and in every way a man. In the preceding century Condé and Turenne in their twenties had led the armies of France to their greatest victories, and although Washington was far from having their precocious military genius, no one

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would have hesitated to entrust him with the command of an important expedition. In the coming war he played a prominent part and it was of incalculable value to him as an experience. To many of the American soldiers of the War of Independence, the Seven Years' War was their military school, and they could not have had a better one.

The Ohio Company pleaded for help against the French, and Dinwiddie, Governor of Virginia, decided to send a memorial to French Headquarters on the Ohio to expostulate on their treatment of peaceful British traders. His choice of an envoy fell on George Washington, and Washington gladly accepted the dangerous errand. Taking with him traders who knew the routes, and interpreters who knew the French language, the young man set forth from Williamsburg in the late autumn of 1753 on a journey which snow and floods made extremely hazardous. On his way he attended Indian councils, exchanged strings of wampum with Indian chiefs, sought to understand their politics and win them over to the British side. He arrived at the French fort on 11th December and on the following day presented his letter. While the French Commander affected to deliberate Washington took mental note of all he saw, and even succeeded in making a plan of the fort. He only obtained an evasive reply, but from his observations it was clear that the French meant to make a big attack in the following spring. He was in such haste to report to the Governor that he left his suite and baggage to follow and with one companion took what was reported to be a short cut on foot. His companion gloomily declared that there

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was not one chance in ten of arriving by such a route in such weather. A wandering Indian, who had been stealthily following them ever since they left the French fort, appeared at a moment when they were tired and footsore and offered to carry Washington's pack. He accepted gladly, and the Indian beguiled them from their route and tried to murder them. Safely through this peril, they came to the Alleghany River, which they could not ford. They made a raft with the one hatchet they possessed; and from this in mid-stream Washington was violently ejected by a collision with a flood of broken ice. They had to abandon the raft and swim to an island in the river, where they spent the night, exercising themselves the whole time so that they should not die of cold. Fortunately the river froze hard in the night and they were able to cross on the ice. It was a most unpleasant experience. At last, safe and sound once more at Williamsburg, Major Washington handed to the Governor the French note and the belts of wampum given him by all the Indian chieftains with whom he had concluded alliances, and, not the least valuable, a Journal kept by himself. This Journal was immediately published throughout England and America and made people in general aware that a great war was approaching and that they must be prepared. At 'Home' everyone clamoured for a declaration of war on France and sufficient enthusiasm was aroused in the colonies to permit the raising of a good many companies. Several were formed in Virginia and the command was offered to Washington, who was requested to lead an attack on the French on the

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Ohio. He refused. 'It is not modesty,' he said, 'but love for my country. It is a charge too great for my youth and inexperience to be trusted with.' He was therefore made lieut.-colonel under Colonel Joshua Fry, and on the death of Fry very shortly he was obliged to step into command of the expedition. In spite of his modesty, he said at this time of himself: 'I have a constitution hardy enough to undergo the most severe trials, and I flatter myself resolution to face what any man dares, as shall be proved when it comes to the test,' and after a first scrap with the French he wrote to his brothers:

'I fortunately escaped without any wound; for the right wing, where I stood, was exposed to and received all the enemy's fire. . . . I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.' This very un-English outburst of military enthusiasm was much laughed at at Home, where it was even carried to the King's ears. George II remarked, 'He would not say so if he had been used to hear many,' and Horace Walpole said dryly, 'Rodomontade!' The hero himself felt in later years that it was not the sort of thing to say—it was rather like the famous 'I cannot tell a lie'—and when some one asked him if he really had said it, he replied:

'If I did, it was when I was young.'

At the fort which he constructed at Great Meadows Washington obtained his first experience in disciplining men whom he was eventually to lead in far different battles for far different ends. Now his heart was full of loyalty to Great Britain; he was proud of possessing a commission in His Majesty's Army;

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and he looked forward to performing distinguished service for a country he loved and revered without any but traditional knowledge and the stories his parents and people like the Fairfaxes had told him about it. He was a fine specimen of 'loyal Virginia.' Brought up to almost military obedience at home, he was at first in despair over the raw material of his companies. We should hardly have considered them amateur soldiers, so hardy were they and such good shots, but they were colonists and pioneers with all the spirit of independence of their class, and it was a long and arduous task to subdue them to rule and order. Washington therefore set forth on a career of training that was to redound to his glory, and his standard of a soldier's behaviour may be seen by his measures against profanity: If any man were heard to swear he received twenty-five lashes without any formality of court martial, and on a second offence the punishment was increased. Washington had something of the spirit that gave such success to the Ironsides of Cromwell.

As the French made no attack on Great Meadows, Washington set forth for Fort Duquesne, leaving a company from North Carolina under Captain Mackay, an officer holding a commission in the regular British army, to hold the fort at Great Meadows. On hearing, however, from the Indians that 800 Frenchmen and 400 Indians were approaching, he returned, and stayed a short time longer in this fort, which he named from the hard conditions under which he stayed there, 'Fort Necessity.' On 3rd July, 1754, the French appeared and the following morning, after a sharp siege, Washington

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was forced to capitulate, obtaining honourable conditions from the French commander. The first momentous 4th of July in his life was not a glorious one. The French losses being nearly four times those of the British, Governor Dinwiddie and the Virginia House of Burgesses decreed a vote of thanks to Washington and his army, 'for their bravery and the gallant manner in which they had conducted themselves in the defence of their country.'

Dinwiddie at this point had a fatal idea; disputes as to command and precedence had sprung up occasionally between officers in the regular army and provincial officers, and he secured the passing of an Act of Parliament at Home by which the former always took precedence of the latter. This Act perhaps first sowed in Washington's mind the seeds of revolt. He at once declared that he could not serve under such conditions, handed in his commission to the Governor, and retired into private life at Mount Vernon. It was not pride, he said to Fairfax, but proper self-respect. The colonies thereupon declared themselves incapable of dealing with the French menace, and Great Britain, fully aware of the necessity for action, made extensive preparations. To deal with what was recognised as a serious matter, a brave and experienced general was appointed—Major-General Braddock, a man of the highest reputation for valour and successful leadership under European conditions, but of an unpliant character, stiff, proud and obstinate. Horace Walpole called him, 'a very Iroquois in disposition.' He came out with splendid and elaborate equipments and superfluities, because all Governors and Generals from the

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Old Country liked, and were perhaps instructed, to impress the colonists. He also came out with a bold heart and every confidence that his task would be an easy one. No prosperous breeze impelled his canvas, and poets of old might have seen the direst Fates in attendance on Braddock and his army, for he was to bring shame on his country and an evil end to himself.

He of course asked for Lieut.-Col. Washington, as Washington was by this time the recognised local authority on the French encroachments, and when Braddock was told that he was in retirement at his farm, he said, with the eighteenth century fondness for classical allusions:

‘He must leave his farm, as Cincinnatus did, for the service of his country!’

Washington found the chance to see fighting under so distinguished a general and with the best British regular troops irresistible, and so he left his plough and came to be one of Braddock’s aides-de-camp, experiencing a thrill of joyful anticipation as he presented himself at Headquarters. He was about to discover how that magic thing, British discipline, was obtained and maintained.

The modest programme for 1755, as planned by the Duke of Cumberland at Home, was, first for Braddock to step into Fort Duquesne, then trip into the French fort of Niagara, then take Fort Frontenac, while other operations were proceeding in Canada. When Washington set out with Braddock’s fine army of ‘Regulars’ and Virginians, in all nearly 3,000 men, well accoutred and provided for, banners flying and bands playing, he exclaimed:

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‘This is the grandest spectacle I ever beheld!’

He was rather astonished at Braddock’s remark that ‘Fort Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days,’ and Benjamin Franklin, whom we meet here for the first time, as Postmaster, ventured to expostulate: those fine troops and artillery would undoubtedly take Fort Duquesne, he said, strongly fortified and garrisoned as it was, but it was the march there that was to be feared. The Virginians all disapproved of the route chosen, the troops having to march in a slender line nearly four miles long, as it might be ‘cut like thread’ by ambushed Indians. Braddock smiled, we are told, at his ignorance and remarked:

‘These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia; but upon the King’s regular and disciplined troops, Sir, it is impossible they should make any impression.’

‘I was conscious,’ says Franklin, ‘of an impropriety in my disputing with a military man in matters of his profession, and said no more.’

Braddock also laughed at the very idea of consulting White Thunder, Silver Heels and other famous Indian sachems, who arrived at his Headquarters with their warriors and departed grievously offended at his scorn.

Hewing his way through forests where loiterers were scalped by Indians, and scaling mountains, Braddock soon learned that war in America was different from war in Europe, and at last complied with Washington’s blunt request that he would leave his wagon-loads of cumbersome equipments and comforts behind, with part of his force, while the rest



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made a dash for Fort Duquesne; even then the Regular officers of the advance party would not part with their hand-mirrors and scent-bottles and, it was well known to the Virginians, deplored the lack of smartness of their colleagues. Also Braddock, accustomed to strict routine, stopped, it was said, to 'level every molehill and make bridges over every brook,' and meanwhile all possibility of a surprise attack passed away. Sometimes the Army only did two miles a day. Washington fell ill and stayed behind with the second party, but joined up the day before the attack and requested the indignant Braddock that the Virginia Rangers, not the Regulars, might advance to the assault on the French fort, now only fifteen miles away. Of course his request was refused.

On the morning of the 9th of July, 1755, the British troops forded the Monongahela in fine style, with drums beating and colours flying, and at noon passed another ford leading straight to Fort Duquesne. Before them lay level ground bordered by deep, thickly wooded ravines which the Virginians were extremely surprised that the General did not have searched before letting his army proceed. Instead, the British troops marched along 'as if in a review in St. James's Park,' and after the advance body had passed through the plain, large bands of hidden French and Indians began to discharge heavy volleys of musketry on the main force, which was preparing to follow. The advance party returned to their aid, but all were alike shot down by the foe hidden in the ravines on their flanks, a foe yelling in such a blood-curdling way that it struck terror into the hearts of the Regulars, ignorant of Indian

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warfare and of the Indian use of these terrifying cries. The whole country round about re-echoed with war-whoops, and those Indians who from moment to moment appeared to aim a deadly shot or to scalp a fallen soldier were painted and befeathered in a ghastly way. So demoralised were the British rank and file that they began to shoot round them indiscriminately, and the havoc wrought on Braddock's troops was inflicted as much by themselves as by the foe. The British officers all fought bravely on that fatal day. Braddock, ever in the thick of the slaughter, showed personal courage, but never attempted to direct his men's firing toward the ravines where the foe was hidden. Five horses were killed under him, and at last a bullet, passing through his right arm, penetrated his lung. He fell from his horse, but still prayed to be left on the field, and was with difficulty removed to a place of safety.

During the whole of this scene Washington had been the most conspicuous figure on the field and a constant mark for the deadly and invisible enemy. All the other aides-de-camp were killed or wounded early in the fray, and he alone carried the General's orders from one part to another. The Indians said afterward that it was no good trying to hit him as he was obviously under the protection of the Great Spirit. A fellow-combatant wrote of him:

'I saw him take hold of a brass field-piece as if it had been a stick. He looked like a fury; he tore the sheet-lead from the touch-hole; he placed one hand on the muzzle, the other on the breach; he pulled with this and he pushed with that, and wheeled it round as if it had been nothing. It tore the ground like a plough. The powder monkey rushed up with the fire, and then the cannon began to bark, I tell you. They fought and they fought, and the Indians yelled, when the rest of the

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cannon made the bark of the trees fly and the Indians came out. That place was called Rock Hill, and they left five hundred men dead on the ground.'

After Braddock's fall, Washington and the Virginians protected as far as they were able the flight of the Regular troops. The retreat of the British army was carried out in the utmost disorder, baggage and even official papers being abandoned and every man doing just as he thought best to secure his personal safety. Washington rode off to seek provisions and ambulance, etc., for the defeated and wounded army, and a few days later Braddock, having scarcely uttered a word since the disaster, died at Great Meadows, where Washington read the funeral service, the chaplain having been killed.

Colonel Dunbar, left with the heavy stores, might, the people of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania thought, have even now if he had gone to the rescue retrieved this great misfortune, but he too was seized with panic and, abandoning the frontier to a foe not numerous and dangerously emboldened with easy victory, he never stopped in his retreat until he arrived at Philadelphia, where he went into winter quarters 'in the dog-days.'

Washington wrote to his mother that 'The dastardly behaviour of those they call Regulars exposed all others that were inclined to do their duty to almost certain death.' Franklin said: 'This whole transaction gave us the first suspicion that our exalted ideas of the prowess of the British Regular troops had not been well-founded.' Washington unwittingly wended his way back to Williamsburg, where he urged on the Governor an immediate attack

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on Fort Duquesne before the French and Indians recovered from their celebrations of their victory. The Indians had become so venturesome that the colonists were in a worse plight than before the arrival of the troops from Great Britain. Washington was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the scanty forces that could be raised in Virginia and established himself at the frontier town of Winchester to protect the country from alarming Indian raids.

This command meant another brush of an unpleasant character with British authority, for a Captain Dagworthy at Fort Cumberland refused to obey orders, claiming that having a commission in the Regular Army he was Washington's superior. To settle this question Washington rode to Boston, a distance of five hundred miles, in the depth of winter, with quite a suite of friends and liveried servants, there to lay the case before Major-General Shirley, now Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America. At Boston the distinguished young colonel who had saved the remnants of Braddock's army and was so tall, handsome and perfectly dressed, with such correct appointments, obtained considerable social success, and won from Shirley a ruling that a commission from a provincial Governor was equal to one from the King.

He got back to Williamsburg in March, 1756, just when the province was in a panic over an Indian inroad that reached as far as Winchester. All around families were being murdered, and no road was safe. He wrote urgent letters to Lord Loudoun, Shirley's successor, and passed the next two years in doing what he could to protect the borders.

## CHAPTER IV: *The Seven Years' War (1756-1763)*

I HAVE given you a detailed account of 'Braddock's Rout' and some part of the general story of the colonists' difficulties and distresses at this time from the Indians and the French, as these conditions and episodes were so important in the life of Washington and in the history of the United States; and I have also shown you that England did not play a very brilliant part in the colonists' eyes. But though important in their effects on the subsequent history of Great Britain also, at the moment they seemed to her very small in proportion to the magnitude of the whole issue between her and France. Moreover, it was characteristic of the moment of political and military indifference in English life in which they happened that they should have aroused very little concern. It was also characteristic of Great Britain that she woke up when people least expected her to do so, and won brilliantly a war begun so unfavourably to her. The first episodes of the war, too, were as disastrous as the preliminaries.

Both sides, still without declaring war, made alliances, France with Spain and Austria, Britain with Prussia, and after Braddock's defeat the French expelled the English from their forts on Lakes Ontario

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and Champlain, and so succeeded in the old plan of linking up Canada with Louisiana. Britain declared war at last—in May, 1756—but did little at first to check French aggression. In 1756, Frederick the Great won some successes for the allied cause, but if Great Britain won anything it was ignominy.

From this state of national humiliation the country was raised by William Pitt, afterward the great Chatham. He said:

‘I want to call England out of that enervate state in which twenty thousand men from France can shake her!’ and he proved that he was able to do so. No one better shows than Chatham how the whole prosperity and fame of a nation may depend on a single man. Burke said of him: ‘a name that keeps the name of this country respectable in every other on the globe.’ He won and maintained the confidence of the country and made it do its best, and he saved the British Empire from the French.

The British Empire in India was founded in 1757, and Frederick the Great forced the French back to the Rhine, while through the genius of Pitt were won the victories of Minden and of Quiberon Bay, where Hawke destroyed the French fleet.

In 1758 Montcalm expelled the British from Ticonderoga, but the whole province of Cape Breton was conquered, and at last in the South the forces of Pennsylvania and Virginia were successfully directed against Fort Duquesne, as you shall now hear.

At the end of 1757 Washington fell dangerously ill and had to be taken home to Mount Vernon, where he passed through a severe illness. During his absence Loudoun gave place to Abercrombie, the first

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person to appreciate what Washington had all along declared, that for the safety of the borders Fort Duquesne must be reduced. When Washington was recovered he again tried to rouse Virginia in the cause, and in one of his repeated journeys to Williamsburg for this purpose, there befell him in the merry month of May, 1758, another and more fortunate romance. As he rode along, his thoughts bent on serious matters, he was not entirely pleased to be hailed from a gateway of a large house by the owner, a rich planter who had known his father. It should never be said, declared the hospitable old gentleman, that George Washington had passed by the house of his father's old friend without dismounting, and he compelled him to enter, much against his will and only on condition that he should leave directly after the midday dinner; and as they went in Washington told his servant that the horses must be at the door when he rose from the table. The servant, used to rigorous punctuality, duly had them out and was surprised beyond measure when hour after hour passed by and his master did not appear, and by the order at length to unsaddle and put the animals up, for they were going to stay all night. At the dinner-table Washington had met the lady who was soon to be his wife, Mrs. Martha Custis, a beautiful, charming widow, very wealthy and unusually gifted. Washington made up his mind on the spot that he should like her further acquaintance, and indeed showed unmistakable signs of love at first sight. When in the morning he tore himself away he galloped at full speed to Williamsburg, accomplished his errand and sped back along the homeward road

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only to draw rein at the 'White House,' where Mrs. Custis lived, and there he stayed until he became her accepted lover, fixing the date of their marriage for immediately after the fall of Fort Duquesne.

The fresh attempt of British Regular troops to take this little fort was again carried out without much regard for local advice, and Braddock's disaster was repeated, and only then was the undertaking definitely handed over to Washington, who thus had the satisfaction of carrying out his dearest wish. But by what seemed a miracle he found this place, which had given so much trouble, deserted and dismantled, as the success of British arms against the French in Canada had made it impossible for the French to get supplies or reinforcements. He planted the British flag on the still smouldering ruins and the fort was restored and named after Britain's great minister Pitt, one of the early heroes of George Washington. As you all probably know, this was the beginning of the great city of Pittsburgh.

The year 1759 was Pitt's great year, and a marvellous year in British history. Ticonderoga was taken from the French, Fort Niagara fell, thus definitely separating Canada from Louisiana (which France subsequently handed to Spain); and in this year took place the heroic episode of Wolfe's siege of Quebec. All know the story of his sailing up the St. Lawrence and seeking in vain to tempt Montcalm to descend from the lofty heights above the river, while the besieging force gradually wasted away from sickness; his final scaling at night of the Heights of Abraham, whence in the morning he proceeded to battle with the French; and how, shot



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through the breast, he lay in the arms of one of his officers, who cried: 'They run!' 'Who run?' asked Wolfe. 'The French,' cried the officer. 'Then,' said Wolfe, 'I die happy!' He died, but the British entered Quebec, and the following year was to see his victory completed by the capture of Montreal and the end of French rule in Canada.

This same year, 1759, saw the British arms victorious everywhere, and Horace Walpole remarked, probably with a yawn, that one was forced to ask every morning what victory there was, 'for fear of missing one.'

It was also the year of Washington's marriage, which had taken place on 6th January at the White House. The personal appearance of Washington, 'the tallest and handsomest man in the Old Dominion'—he was six foot three inches—and his handsome and imposing-looking bride, dressed in the latest English fashion, with all the great people of the colony, richly clad in silks and fine array, with gold trimmings, old lace, jewels and feathers, made the ceremony a splendid and memorable one.

The newly married pair lived for some time at the White House before moving with Mrs. Washington's two children, a boy and a girl, to Mount Vernon, Washington's stately home.

'I am now,' Washington wrote to a friend, 'I believe, fixed at this seat with an agreeable partner for life, and I hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienced amidst the wide and bustling world.'

It is clear he was no prophet, but he was to enjoy fifteen years of domestic peace before the great time

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came when all America was in an uproar and he had to bid a long farewell to wife and home. For fifteen years he was to go back to his 'plough.' He was a princely farmer, being also a tobacco planter, a miller, a merchant importing and exporting directly for his own account, keeping great patriarchal herds of cattle and sheep and spinning his own linen and wool (with the exception of articles of luxury and fashion, which were shipped to his wharves direct from Great Britain). Such was his reputation as an honest merchant that his goods were exempt from customs inspection at the ports to which they were sent. The negro slaves employed on his estate were so numerous that they had their own hamlet in his grounds, and all village industries were practised. The stables were well stocked with choice breeds of horses, the kennels with hounds. They had numerous equipages, including a chariot and four in which they drove on state occasions, a beautiful barge on the river rowed by negroes, a pack of fox-hounds, vast orchards and extensive ornamental grounds. The new Mrs. Washington had the domestic skill of the mother of Washington, and like her husband, loved orderly splendour in dress and appointments, though never stepping beyond the proper frontiers of middle-class opulence and solid comfort of the English sort, and rather more than less elegance than other colonists in their position. If they made what really amounted to a considerable show, it was never so much as their means would have permitted. We must not forget to think of Washington on state occasions as dressed, not in the sober fashion of men of our own time, but in silks or satins, white or dain-

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tily coloured; powdered wig, and buckled shoes. Among the Mount Vernon archives are still to be seen written in his own hand orders such as these—‘superfine blue cotton velvet for coat, waistcoat and breeches, with fine silk buttons to match and necessary trimmings, with garters for the breeches, fine worked ruffles, riding waistcoats of superfine scarlet cloth and gold lace with plain double gilt buttons’—orders sent to his agents in Great Britain to be forwarded with his more solid consignments.

He never ceased to be an active worker, constantly improving his estate. He rose early, often lighting his own fire and reading or writing by candle-light. At eight o’clock in winter and seven in summer he had breakfast, consisting only of tea and a few ‘hoe-cakes,’ made of Indian meal, then departed on horseback to make the round of his estate. Dinner at 2 o’clock was a fairly substantial meal; and was followed a few hours later by tea and then at 9 o’clock by bed. There was considerable society life during the session of the legislature, as the Governors brought over British fashions and nearly always one of the sons of a rich planter would have been sent ‘Home’ for his education and have returned with ideas of the amusements of a very gay period of English life. Thus balls and parties abounded, and the Washingtons, though grave and serious people, did not fail to make punctual appearances at these colonial festivities. To their parish church they went with unfailing regularity and the whole big household of Mount Vernon assembled at family prayers daily.

The sort of figure Washington made in the public

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mind in the years before the War of Independence may be gathered from the following amusing story: 'It was boasted,' wrote Mr. Custis, on the occasion of a visit of Washington to New York, 'at the table of the British Governor, that a regiment landed from England contained among its officers some of the finest specimens of martial elegance in His Majesty's service—in fact the most superb looking fellows ever landed upon the shores of the New World. "I wager Your Excellency a pair of gloves," said Mrs. Morris, an American lady, "I will show you a finer man in the procession to-morrow than Your Excellency can select from your famous regiment." "Done, Madam," replied the Governor. The morrow came (the 4th of June), and the procession, in honour of the birthday of the King, advanced through Broadway to the strains of military music. As the troops defiled before the Governor, he pointed out to the lady several officers by name, claiming her admiration for their superior presence and brilliant equipments. In the rear of the troops came a band of officers not on duty—colonial officers—and strangers of distinction. Immediately on their approach the attention of the Governor was seen to be directed toward a tall, martial figure, that marched with grave and measured tread, apparently indifferent to the scene around him. The lady now archly observed, "I perceive that Your Excellency's eyes are turned to the right object; what say you to your wager now, Sir?" "Lost, Madam," replied the gallant Governor. "When I laid my wager I was not aware that Col. Washington was in New York."'

To complete the picture of the old happy days of

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peace before the colonies tore themselves apart from Great Britain, we will lift the curtain of the old House of Burgesses of Virginia at the moment when George Washington first took his seat there. He was introduced by the Speaker with such eulogy, and the applause of the Assembly was so unanimous, that he found in his agitation and humility no words in which to reply. He made three vain attempts, and then the Speaker came to his rescue, saying:

‘Sit down, Mr. Washington! Your modesty equals your valour and that surpasses the power of anything I possess.’

## CHAPTER V: *Great Britain in the Eighteenth Century*

THE Seven Years' War, one of the most triumphal wars England has ever waged, and mixed with almost equal good and evil for her destinies, since by it she won India and Canada and ultimately lost the American colonies, formed and trained almost all the American officers of the subsequent War of Independence. As we have seen, it set up the first serious friction between Great Britain and the colonies and showed the colonists how sometimes Great Britain was not all-wise or all-powerful; and it is related that a French statesman foretold long before the event that the Treaty of Paris of 1763, by which France lost her possessions in America, would mean the severance of the link that bound the American colonies to the mother country. 'She will call on them to contribute toward supporting the burdens they have helped to bring on her,' he said, 'and they will answer by striking off all dependence.'

The affection of Great Britain for her children across the seas had always been frankly an interested one. Their commerce had made her rich and it now appeared as though greediness were about to burst the sack. She was no longer satisfied with her indirect gains, and moreover, as hinted above,

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wished to recuperate for her enormous expenditure on the protection of the colonies in the late war. Scarcely therefore was the ink dry on the treaty with France when schemes were pushed forward at 'Home' to draw a direct revenue from the American colonies. Directly the rumour of approaching taxation crossed the Atlantic, Washington, among others, counselled resistance, declaring that the colonists could never agree to taxation without representation. Already, they said, the mother country had pushed her restrictions on American commerce to their utmost extent; the colonies were not allowed to import or export except to Great Britain and to British possessions, and in order to ensure the balance of trade being in favour of Great Britain they were not allowed to manufacture certain articles, which they were thus forced to buy from Great Britain.

The best statesmen at home disapproved of the new financial policy with regard to America. Sir Robert Walpole said, years before, in words long remembered:

'It must be a bolder man than myself, and one less friendly to commerce, who should venture on such an expedient.'

In spite of an opposition of the weightiest kind, from the point of view of brains and character, the British Parliament in 1764 declared that the British legislature had the right to tax America, and a plan to establish a standing army there found favour.

Before beginning, however, our story of the American Revolution, we will take a brief glance at the home country on the eve of this revolution,

## *Great Britain in the 18th Century*

and in order to understand how great and splendid was Britain at that time, when she had first taken her place at the head of all nations, we cannot do better than go to the pages of Thackeray, and especially to his lectures on 'The Four Georges.'

We will start with Thackeray's picture of the King, or at least with a corner of his portrait of the poor old monarch who has been the butt for so many wits; and if any of you have time to read it you may enjoy one of the best of the satires on him in Byron's 'Vision of Judgment.' Thackeray's account is almost as cruel, and nearly as amusing. George III (1760-1820), he relates, 'is said not to have cared for Shakespeare or tragedy much; farces and pantomimes were his joy; and especially when clown swallowed a carrot or a string of sausages he would laugh so outrageously that the lovely Princess by his side would have to say: "My gracious monarch, do compose yourself." But he continued to laugh, and at the very smallest farces, as long as his poor wits were left him. His mother was a harsh and gloomy woman. "George, be a King!" were the words which she was for ever croaking in the ears of her son: and a king the simple, stubborn, affectionate, bigoted man tried to be. He did his best; he worked according to his lights; what virtue he knew, he tried to practise; what knowledge he could master, he strove to acquire. . . . There is something grand about his courage. The battle of the King with his aristocracy remains yet to be told. . . . It was he, with the people to back him, who made the war with America; it was he and the people who refused justice to the Roman Catholics; and on both questions he beat the pa-



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tricians. He bribed, he bullied, he darkly dissembled on occasion; he exercised a slippery perseverance and a vindictive resolution, which one almost admires as one thinks his character over. His courage was never to be beat. It trampled North under foot; it bent the stiff neck of the younger Pitt: even his illness never conquered that indomitable spirit. As soon as his brain was clear it resumed the scheme, only laid aside when his reason left him; as soon as his hands were out of the strait-waistcoat they took up the pen and the plan which had engaged him up to the moment of his malady.'

'King George's household was a model of an English gentleman's household. It was early; it was kindly; it was charitable; it was frugal; it was orderly; it must have been stupid to a degree which I shudder now to contemplate. . . . Day after day was the same. At the same hour at night the King kissed his daughters' jolly cheeks; the Princesses kissed their mother's hand; and Madame Thielke brought the royal nightcap. At the same hour the equerries and women in waiting had their little dinner, and cackled over their tea. The King had his backgammon or his evening concert; the equerries yawned themselves to death in the anteroom; or the King and his family walked on Windsor slopes, the King holding his darling little Princess Amelia by the hand; and the people crowded round quite good-naturedly; and the Eton boys thrust their chubby cheeks under the crowd's elbows; and the concert over, the King never failed to take his enormous cocked hat off and salute his band, and say, "Thank you, gentlemen."

'A quieter household, a more prosaic life than this of Kew or Windsor cannot be imagined. Rain or shine, the King rode every day for hours; poked his red face into hundreds of cottages round about, and showed that shovel hat and Windsor uniform to farmers, to pig-boys, to old women making apple-dumplings, to all sorts of people, gentle and simple, about whom countless stories are told. Nothing can be more undignified than these stories. When Haroun Alraschid visits a subject incog. the latter is sure to be much the better for the caliph's magnificence. Old George showed no such royal splendour. He used to give a guinea sometimes, sometimes feel in his pockets and find that he had no money; often ask a man a hundred questions—about the number of his family, about his oats and beans, about the rent he paid for his

# *Great Britain in the 18th Century*

house—and ride on. . . . All the world knows the story of his malady; all history knows no sadder figure than that of the old man, blind and deprived of reason, wandering through the rooms of his palace, addressing imaginary parliaments, reviewing fancied troops, holding ghostly courts. I have seen his picture as it was taken at this time, hanging in the apartment of his daughter, the Landgravine of Hesse Hombourg—amidst books and Windsor furniture and a hundred fond reminiscences of her English home. The poor old father is represented in a purple gown, his snowy beard falling idly over his breast—the star of his famous Order still idly shining on it. He was not only sightless, he became utterly deaf. All light, all reason, all sound of human voices, all the pleasures of this world of God were taken from him. Some slight lucid moments he had, in one of which the Queen, desiring to see him, entered the room and found him singing a hymn and accompanying himself at the harpsichord. When he had finished, he knelt down and prayed aloud for her, and then for his family, and then for the nation, concluding with a prayer for himself, that it might please God to avert his heavy calamity from him, but if not, to give him resignation to submit. He then burst into tears and his reason again fled.’

‘We do not quite leave him as Byron does, ‘practising the Hundredth Psalm.’

For the aristocracy of Great Britain, it was at the height of its splendour under the nominal headship of George III.

‘As one reads the Selwyn letters,’ says Thackeray, ‘as one looks at Reynolds’s noble pictures illustrative of those magnificent times and voluptuous people, one almost hears the voice of the dead past—the laughter and the chorus; the toast called over the brimming cups; the shout at the race-course or the gaming-table; the merry joke frankly spoken to the laughing fine lady. How fine those ladies were, those ladies who heard and spoke such coarse jokes; how grand those gentlemen!

‘I fancy that peculiar product of the past, the fine gentleman, has almost vanished off the face of the earth, and is disappearing like the beaver or the Red Indian. . . . Children do not go down on their knees to beg their parents’ blessing; chaplains do not say grace and retire before the pudding; servants do not say “your honour” and “your worship” at every moment; tradesmen do not stand hat in hand as the gentleman passes; authors do not wait for hours in gentlemen’s anterooms with a fulsome dedication for which they hope to get five guineas from his lordship. In the days when there were fine gentlemen, Mr. Secretary Pitt’s under-secretaries did not dare to sit down before him, but Mr. Pitt in

## George Washington

his turn went down on his gouty knees to George II; and when George III spoke a few kind words to him, Lord Chatham burst into tears of reverential joy and gratitude; . . . Fancy Lord John Russell or Lord Palmerston on their knees whilst the Sovereign was reading a dispatch, or beginning to cry because Prince Albert said something civil.'

Turning away from this great world, gay and corrupt as never before or since in English history, so tradition says, we will turn to the real glory of Britain,—‘the working educated men, away from Lord North’s bribery in the senate; the good clergy not corrupted into parasites by hopes of preferment; the tradesmen rising into manly opulence; the painters pursuing their gentle calling; the men of letters in their quiet studies: these are the men we love and like to read of in the last age. How small the grandees and the men of pleasure look beside them! how contemptible the stories of George III court squabbles are beside the recorded talk of dear old Johnson! What is the grandest entertainment at Windsor compared to a night at the club over its modest cups, with Percy and Langton, and Goldsmith and poor Bozzy at the table! I declare I think that of all the polite men of that age Joshua Reynolds was the finest gentleman. And they were good as well as witty and wise, those dear old friends of the past. . . . Ah! I would have liked a night at the *Turk’s Head*, even though bad news had arrived from the colonies, and Doctor Johnson was growling against the rebels; to have sat with him and Goldy, and to have heard Burke, the finest talker in the world, and to have had Garrick flashing in with a story from his theatre!’

The estimation in which the colonies were held in British society at that time was very like the present attitude of the metropolis intellectually and artistically, to the provinces; and an eminent administrator even went so far as to call them Britain’s ‘back-doors.’ The idea that they might dispute British acts called forth a scorn that was almost brutal from hoary Tories and old-aristocratic Whigs, and following the Declaratory Act of 1764 referred to above came the notorious Stamp Act of 1765, which was the signal for the first rising. By this act all legal documents were to be written on stamped paper purchased from the British Government. The opposition in America took at first the form of respectful

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petitions, and when the petitions were disregarded, and the Act came into force, the day from which it dated was observed as a day of mourning, with tolling bells and flags at half-mast. Parliament on this felt its dignity suffer and became anxious about obtaining due respect for its 'prerogative,' a favourite word in the eighteenth century, before statesmen learned that this terrible fear of loss of dignity was more befitting a village schoolmaster than the statesmen of a large empire. To humble the colonists, therefore, the appointment of judges in America was reserved to British commissioners, and it was decreed that Americans might be taken to Great Britain for trial.

Nearly all the provincial Assemblies denounced the Act, and Associations were formed and pledges taken against the use of British manufactures. This brought the commercial interest in Great Britain to their side and, giving way before the clamours of this party, a Committee of the House of Commons was formed to consider the question. Before this Committee appeared Benjamin Franklin, then in London, and his statements led to the repeal of the Act in February, 1766. Many people thought the colonists were simply showing an unruly spirit and discontented disposition, that this opposition was only a pretext for a quarrel, and that their victory would be the thin end of the wedge—giving in, they said, would fatally injure 'prerogative' and encourage further impudence. Therefore Franklin was eagerly questioned as to the disposition of America *before the passing of the Act*, and it was noted that he had no hesitation in replying:

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'The best in the world. . . . They were governed by this country at the expense only of a little pen, ink and paper. . . . Natives of Great Britain were always treated with particular regard; to be an Old England man was, of itself, a character of some respect, and gave a kind of rank among us.'

If the Stamp Act were not repealed, he foretold the total loss of the respect and affection of the Americans and also the total loss of their commerce, while they would only submit to it by force of arms.

The repeal was carried out by the ministry of Rockingham, the friend and patron of Burke, but this ministry, pledged to a broadminded policy with regard to America, did not last very long, and was replaced by a curious administration described by Burke, in a well-known passage:

'He (the aged Chatham, the statesman of the Seven Years' War) made an administration so checkered and speckled; he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies—that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same boards stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, "Sir, your name?"—"Sir, you have the advantage of me"—"Mr. Such-a-one"—"I beg a thousand pardons". . . . When his face was hid but for a moment, his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass. The gentlemen, his particular friends, who with the names of various departments of ministry were admitted to seem as if they acted a part under him, with a modesty that becomes all men, and with a confidence in him that was justified even in its extravagance by his superior abilities, had never in any instance presumed upon any opinion of their own. Deprived of his guiding influence, they were whirled about, the sport of every gust, and easily driven into any port; and as those who joined with them in manning the vessel were the most directly opposite to his opinions, measures and character, and far the most artful and most powerful of the set, they easily prevailed, so as to

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seize upon the vacant, unoccupied and derelict minds of his friends, and instantly they turned the vessel wholly out of the course of his policy . . . and with great parade, in his name, they made an act declaring it highly just and expedient to raise a revenue in America.'

So the new Revenue Act of 1767 and other oppressive measures were passed, and the colonies were set aflame. Not only were resolutions taken not to use British goods again, but it was decided to start the manufacture of the prohibited articles. This led Great Britain to send an army to the colonies to restore the authority of Government, and in September, 1768, fourteen men-of-war, bearing 700 British troops, appeared off Boston harbour.

## CHAPTER VI: *Commander-in-Chief*

**B**URKE said that he did not choose to break the American spirit because it was the spirit that had made England. A love of freedom was the predominating feature of the colonists, and they would resist every effort to take from them the only advantage they thought worth living for. They were the descendants of Englishmen, and England was a nation that adored her freedom. At the time of the emigrations to New England in the seventeenth century this characteristic was most prominent, and the colonists, he told Parliament, 'took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands.' They were therefore not only devoted to liberty, 'but to liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles.' They nearly all studied law, and 'they augur misgovernment at a distance, and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.' 'The temper and character which prevail in our colonies are,' he said, 'I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition; your speech would betray you. An Englishman is



Washington crossing the Delaware  
(1776-1777)





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the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.'

So the curtain was drawn up on the struggle, a struggle more for dignity's sake than for any solid gain anticipated by Great Britain, and in March, 1770, the first blow was struck, on the occasion of the famous 'Boston Massacre,' a great name for a small though significant incident, four civilians being killed, and several wounded, by the military.

The town of Boston had been for two years in military occupation, and although the Opposition secured a repeal of the Revenue Act as a whole, the tax on tea was retained, not for revenue but for the principle of the thing, as an assertion of the right of Great Britain to place taxes. The colonists refused to touch the tea, although the price had been artfully arranged to tempt them, and in vain tea-laden ships were sent to cruise in the harbours of a tea-loving people. Some of them were not even allowed to discharge, and at Boston the ships would have sailed away again with their goods, as they did from the other ports, but this the Governor would not permit. A party of Bostonians, therefore, in 1773, disguised as Red Indians, went aboard a vessel and discharged the cargo into the sea. This was the famous 'Boston Tea Party,' and the biggest storm there ever was in a tea-cup. Washington called the taxed tea 'gunpowder tea,' as it caused explosions all over America. As a punishment for this outrageous deed 'Boston Port Bill' closed that harbour and put a full-stop to its trade. This was looked upon by the colonists as a final piece of 'tyranny' on the part of Great Britain.

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The House of Burgesses of Virginia had not been slow in denouncing the new trend of British policy. Patrick Henry, one of the heroes of the Revolution, presented in 1765 inflammatory resolutions to the House, and after some modifications they were adopted, whereupon the assembly was immediately dissolved by the Governor. In the course of the debate Henry made a speech which put him at the head of American orators, and when all were hanging on the words that dropped from his lips, the young man said menacingly:

‘Caesar had his Brutus, Charles I his Cromwell, and George III——’

‘Treason, treason!’ interrupted the speaker.

‘And George III may profit by their example,’ concluded Patrick Henry in loud and ringing tones. ‘If this be treason, make the most of it!’

Washington voted for the resolutions of Patrick Henry and expressed his indignation with the Governor for dissolving the Assembly. Lord Fairfax, on the other hand, strongly on the side of the ‘Tories,’ as the loyalists were later to be called, condemned severely any criticism of the Home Government, and warned Washington against the ‘wrath of the British lion.’ He thought Boston justified in refusing to use taxed goods, but her further action he qualified as ‘insurrection.’ Washington disapproved of some actions of the Bostonians, such as ill treatment of the stamp distributors, but he declared his full sympathy with the people, who had been driven to such steps by ‘acts of usurpation and tyranny,’ and he, with most other people, mourned and fasted.

A new Governor again dissolved the Assembly,

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and the burgesses took to meeting at the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg, where Washington brought forward articles of Association, on the New England pattern, pledging those who signed not to use articles taxed by the mother country in order to raise a revenue in America.

From this time on, the Virginian Assembly was constantly prorogued and the burgesses became more and more irritated. On 1st March, 1773, therefore, they appointed a committee of eleven to collect acts and resolutions of the British Parliament which affected the British colonies, and to get into touch with the sister colonies. This initial step of 'our noble patriotic sister colony of Virginia' was followed immediately by most of the sister colonies, and the plan of a General Congress was approved, to be held on 5th September at Philadelphia to deliberate on the united interests of the colonies. The Massachusetts Assembly took a 'Solemn League and Covenant'—and those who knew their English history grew frightened when they heard again the ring of those words—to break off all intercourse with Great Britain from 1st August.

Thomas Jefferson, another Virginian who was to be President of the United States one day, was elected delegate for his county to the General Congress at Philadelphia, and also requested to draft the instructions of Virginia to its delegates. He took, he tells us, the ground 'that the relation between Great Britain and its colonies was the same as that of England and Scotland after the accession of James and until the union, and the same as her present relations with Hanover, having the same executive

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chief but no other necessary political connexion; and that our emigration from England to this country gave her no more rights over us than the emigrations of the Danes and Saxons gave to the present authorities of the mother country over England.'

Thus the first fateful General Congress began to loom on the American horizon, as ten years later the States-General was to dawn on the horizon of France, and the separation from Great Britain was approaching ever more rapidly and steadily. Washington, in a strain of eloquence unusual with him, urged constancy and abstinence from all but the bare necessities of life, and declared that he was himself ready to raise 1,000 men, maintain them at his own expense, and march at their head to the relief of Boston.

It is astounding that Great Britain should have taken no adequate steps to put matters right, for she neither granted the colonists' demands nor sent out sufficient force to quell them. Indeed, General Gage, recently appointed to military command in Massachusetts, said to the King on leaving Britain:

'The Americans will only be lions so long as the English are lambs.'

Washington declared that his conduct after his arrival was 'more becoming a Turkish bashaw than an English Governor,' and that his declaration that it was treasonable to associate in any way that could affect the commerce of Great Britain was 'an unexampled testimony of the most despotic system of tyranny that ever was practised in a free Government.' He pinned his faith, however, chiefly to refusing English importations, at the same time insisting that remittances due to Great Britain should

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be paid. 'While we are accusing others of injustice,' he said, 'we should be just ourselves.'

¶ The fellow delegates of Washington from Virginia counted among them famous names—Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Benjamin Harris;—and Gage, already startled by the 'Solemn League and Covenant' of Massachusetts, began to form some idea of the proportions of the coming revolt of the colonies when he heard of the calling of this General Congress.

Soon Washington, in company with two colleagues, was riding away from Mount Vernon for Philadelphia where that Congress was to be held, and its first session opened in Carpenters' Hall on 5th September, 1774. John Adams, who had been helping to direct the Bostonians in their resistance to the military grip that was on them, declared that, 'It is such an assembly as never before came together on a sudden in any part of the world. Here are fortunes, abilities, learning, eloquence, acuteness, equal to any I ever met with in my life. Here is a diversity of religion, education, manners, interests such as it would seem impossible to unite in one plan of conduct.' Patrick Henry said: 'All America is thrown into one mass. Where are your land-marks, your boundaries of colonies? They are all thrown down! The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers and New Englanders, are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American.'

When a rumour arrived of a cannonade of Boston by the British, whose ships filled the harbour, fiery indignation filled every heart. Congress assembled the next morning and at the usual daily divine

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service the 35th Psalm happening to be the psalm for the day, it was thought that this was by Providential ruling. At its close the specially appointed chaplain to Congress burst out into an extempore prayer for America, for the Congress, for the province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially for the town of Boston.

Patrick Henry's eloquent appeals to his countrymen on this occasion to oppose Great Britain to the end were never forgotten. But on the whole the proceedings of Congress, always 'awfully solemn,' were models of business method and legal dryness. The 'Petition of Right' and the 'Bill of Right' of Stuart times in Great Britain were remembered by men who had received from their grandfathers and great-grandfathers accounts of those great struggles for popular freedom, and now a 'Declaration of Colonial Rights' was drawn up. This document claimed for the descendants of Englishmen the right to legislate, and rejected all imperial taxation that was imposed solely for the raising of a revenue in America; it asserted the right to trial by jury, won so long ago as Magna Charta, to public meeting, and to petition the King; it pronounced against the maintenance of a standing army in any colony in time of peace without the consent of the legislature of the colony; and all the Acts which had lately been 'unlawfully' passed by the British Parliament were condemned. The subtlety with which the colonial mind at this Congress dealt with nice points of law and could put Great Britain in the wrong, and the general old-fashioned Whig calmness displayed, amazed many of themselves, and made

## Commander-in-Chief

John Adams, deeply read in political history, think of the Privy Councils of Queen Elizabeth; and in the whole Congress the man of most unquestioned weight was Washington. Chatham said, appearing, unconquerable old man, in the House of Lords from his sick-bed in order to support the memorial sent by Congress to Parliament, and with all the old fire in eyes and voice:

‘The Acts must be repealed; they *will* be repealed. You cannot enforce them. But bare repeal will not satisfy this enlightened and spirited people. . . . You must declare you have *no right to tax them.* . . . I have crawled to this House, my lords, to give you my best advice, which is to beseech His Majesty that orders may instantly be despatched to General Gage to remove the troops from Boston. Their presence is a source of perpetual irritation and suspicion to those people. How can they trust you with the bayonet at their breast? They have all the reason in the world to believe that you mean their death or slavery. . . . My lords, if the ministers thus persevere in misadvising the King he will be undone. He may, indeed, still wear his crown, but, the American jewel out of it, it will not be worth the wearing.’

His words fell on deaf ears now, and it was ordered that 7,000 more soldiers should be sent to Boston without delay. These troops, however, found when they got to Boston that instead of controlling America they were practically a small and isolated garrison in a beleaguered town, in the midst of a hostile population. Gage, in view of the situation, had all the munitions he could lay hands on collect-



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ed and brought into the city, and fortified 'Boston Neck.' Then he waited for an opportunity to get out, and he had to wait.

In March, 1776, a Virginian Convention met at Richmond, and here first it was realised how the new political ideas had been germinating and growing in men's minds. Patrick Henry declared with all his fervour and enthusiasm:

'We must fight, I repeat it, Sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us.' (Washington offered to accept the command of a Company which his brother John Augustine was training for the purpose of the Revolution, and already spoke of devoting his life and fortune to 'the Cause'.)

<sup>2</sup>The first shot was fired in 1775. Gage had planned a surprise attack on Concord arsenal for the night of April 18th, but the colonial 'Committee of Safety' was fully aware of all his preparations, and when Major Pitcairn arrived at Lexington near Concord he found a few score countrymen on the Green, armed after the colonial fashion. He bade them depart and on their refusal fired on them and killed or put them to flight, then went on to Concord, only to discover that a large part of the munitions had been removed. Finding the look of the country ugly enough he retreated in all haste to Boston. 'If the retreat had not been so precipitate,' wrote Washington, 'and God knows it could not well have been more so—the ministerial troops must have surrendered or been totally cut off.' Washington Irving describes the 'troops which in the morning had marched through Roxbury to the tune of Yankee

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Doodle' returning at sunset 'hounded along the old Cambridge Road to Charlestown Neck by mere armed yeomanry.' Old Israel Putnam, working in his fields, left the plough in the furrow, sent his son home to inform the household of his movements, and set out for Boston. Washington too was swept away by the great wave of indignation. When he heard of Lexington he wrote to Fairfax, then in England:

'Unhappy it is to reflect that a brother's sword has been sheathed in a brother's breast, and that the once happy and peaceful plains of America are to be either drenched with blood or inhabited by slaves.' The first gun was fired at Lexington, and, said John Adams, it was heard all round the world. This episode was the real beginning of the War of Independence. The various States at once began to raise armies, and Washington at the second General Congress at Philadelphia declared again that there was but one course for Americans: 'The army of Great Britain,' he said, 'has deliberately attacked us. The work of this Congress should be to create an army and provide for defence. . . . Our appeals have been spurned; our entreaties have been interpreted as the pleas of cowardice; our patience has been regarded as pusillanimity. Because British oppression has been met by respectful remonstrance instead of indignant denunciation, it has appealed to arms; and that appeal must be promptly met by warlike preparations and the challenge to battle.'

{ It was unanimously decided that of the 'Continental' army in process of formation Washington should be Commander-in-Chief, and he accepted the

## *George Washington*

dangerous honour of being chief rebel without hesitation—only refusing payment for anything but expenses, of which he kept a strict account.) Everyone at the time—and even more at the time, so gloomy in prospects, than later—thought that it was a great sacrifice for a man like Washington to give up all the comforts of middle-age for no hope of private ambition and assume the leadership of a cause that seemed desperate; for what were the colonists in wealth or training that they should presume to draw the sword against the mother country—at the height of her prestige, at the close of a great war in which she had defeated the most famous armies of Europe? He wrote to his brother John Augustine:

‘I am now to bid adieu to you and to every kind of domestic ease, for a while. I am embarked on a wide ocean, boundless in its prospect, and in which, perhaps, no safe harbour is to be found. I have been called upon by the unanimous voice of the colonies to take the command of the Continental Army, an honour I neither sought after nor desired, as I am thoroughly convinced that it requires great abilities and much more experience than I am master of.’

(On 20th June, 1775, he received his commission from Congress, and it was said that he appeared in every respect an ideal commander, and that the air rang with acclamations when he first took his place at the head of his troops—a splendid manly figure such as an officers’ corps rarely saw, and a man who in every way could command the obedience of his fellow colonists.)

(It was a long time before he could coordinate their efforts, and before he took up the reins of command

## *Commander-in-Chief*

their independent exertions had won some brilliant successes, which had, however, no permanent fruit. For instance, the forts of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, which from their situation commanded the main route to Canada, were seized by surprise from the negligent British.

Boston, however, had been and remained the centre of interest and Washington bent his course straight for the American camp outside that city, without even taking the time to go home to say farewell to his household or arrange his affairs, though, as we have seen, he realised that he might never see Mount Vernon again. 'Duty,' he said, as did Nelson later, 'is the watchword now!' To his wife he wrote:

'It was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment without exposing my character to such censures as would have reflected dishonour upon myself and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, could not and ought not to be pleasant to you, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem.'

As he approached New York on his way to the Boston camp, he was met by a courier with the news of the first pitched battle of the war—the Battle of Bunker's Hill, and after listening with rapt attention to the account of the extraordinary valour of the colonials, he saw in the engagement, as everyone else saw, that the colonists had won a moral victory, and he exclaimed:

'The liberties of our country are saved!'

Let us now see the great things that had been happening at Boston before Washington's arrival. ~

## CHAPTER VII: *The Siege of Boston (1775-1776)*

**A**T Boston, General Gage and the British troops found themselves in the position of soldiers in a besieged fortress. They could not get out by land, because of the colonial army and the vast unfriendly country, and they could get supplies from America neither by land nor sea, for the same reason.

Great Britain, determined on the subjugation of these unruly subjects, sent further forces and her distinguished generals, Howe, Burgoyne and Henry Clinton, and it is said that as they sailed into the harbour and Burgoyne was shown the 'rebel camp' with its 10,000 yeomanry holding imprisoned the 5,000 Regular troops in Boston, he exclaimed in wrath:

'What! Ten thousand peasants keep 5,000 King's troops shut up! Well, let's get in, and we'll soon find elbow room!'

The 'peasants' then had the brilliant idea of establishing themselves on Bunker's Hill and Dorchester Heights, on the north side of Boston and from these posts of vantage bombarding the town and harbour. Breed's Hill, within sight and hearing of the town garrison, was occupied and fortified after a fashion one warm summer's night while Boston slept

## *The Siege of Boston (1775-1776)*

secure, even the sentry's cry of 'All's well!' coming to the ears of the rebels as they toiled feverishly to make their position defensible, and by morning the sight of this camp over their heads greatly annoyed the British. Of course the officers as they performed their careful morning toilets and jested in the light eighteenth-century way, in the way of a lost society, delightful and now impossible to recover, saw the 'works' with scorn and amusement, turned out to sweep them away with some boredom, and thought to drive the rustics in their country frocks and with their antiquated fowling-pieces back into their 'camp.' Gage gave the order for the hill to be taken, and, while the rebels were energetically throwing up further works on Bunker's Hill, preparations were made to attack them. Three times did the British ascend to the capture of Breed's Hill, and twice were they thrown back with great slaughter, and the third time they remonstrated at the order to attack, for they learned for the first time that the colonists were unerring marksmen. Burgoyne wrote home afterward:

'Sure I am, nothing ever has or ever can be more dreadfully terrible than what was to be seen or heard at this time. The most incessant discharge of guns that ever was heard by mortal ears!' The Americans retreated only when they had come to an end of their ammunition, and then they retreated in perfect order, as they were to do in the many defeats that awaited them in the early part of this great struggle, and so they lost only 450 men, whereas the British, who fought with equal courage and doggedness, lost 1054 killed and wounded. Among

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the bravest of the brave was old Putnam, who rode about in a sleeveless waistcoat on account of the heat, and looked, said the British, 'much fitter to head a band of sickle men or ditchers than musketeers.'

So was the Battle of Bunker's Hill lost and won, and it caused such exultation to the Americans and such humiliation to the British that it amounted in fact to a great moral victory for the former.

While Boston was thus left the centre of British rule, the question of who was to have New York loomed on the horizon, as there was a large loyalist party there. The city was of the utmost importance both on account of its trade and of its position, for in British hands it would be a barrier between the eastern and western colonies. At present it was doubtful which party would get the upper hand, and to General Schuyler, who had obtained much experience in the Seven Years' War, Washington gave command here. A new Governor from England was daily expected at New York, and Washington accompanied by Generals Schuyler and Lee was approaching from Philadelphia on his way to the rebel headquarters at Cambridge by Boston, and the city had to choose. The civic authorities therefore thinking more of safety than political rights and wrongs, gave the order that military honours were to be accorded to the party that arrived first; and as Washington arrived first he was received with every mark of recognition of his position. But New York, far from the simplicity of spirit and single-minded heroism of New England and Pennsylvania, had a strong commercial sense, and

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when the new Governor from England landed he received the same honours. What was to be done? On leaving, Washington said significantly to Schuyler:

‘If forcible measures are judged necessary respecting the present Governor, I should have no difficulty in ordering them if the Continental Congress were not sitting, but as that is the case, and the seizing of a Governor quite a new thing, I must refer you to that body for direction.’

Such an outrageous step Congress was not yet prepared to take, and yet it is clear that Washington was right—it would have cleared the path of America considerably if the Governor had been arrested at the first opportunity.

Washington then went on his way with Lee and on his arrival at Cambridge he had his first taste of greatness. The uproarious applause of the soldiery and the salvoes of artillery rending the air were heard in Boston, and in a pompous ceremonial he took over his command. The ‘Great Elm’ under which he wheeled his horse and drew his sword is still pointed out, and tales of his splendid appearance are still to be read in American histories. Mrs. John Adams wrote to her husband:

‘Dignity, ease and complacency, the gentleman and the soldier, look agreeably blended in him. Modesty marks every line and feature of his face.’

The Cause of his country, said Washington, had called him to play an active and dangerous part, and he relied on Divine Providence to discharge it with ability and success.

The house at Cambridge where Washington took up his abode was afterward known as Craigie House.



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Sparks edited his writings within its walls and here Longfellow afterward lived. Washington here continued his old simple way of life, or rather he simplified it still farther, eating baked apples and drinking milk, and often leaving an officer to represent him at the festive board when such rare events as banquets took place. 'Old Put' was a kindred spirit, and together they introduced the severest discipline, with punishment of many lashes. If Congress decreed a day of prayer and fasting, officers and men were compelled to observe that day by abstaining from worldly occupations and attending service. As in the Indian wars, Washington was greatly distressed by the spirit of independence of his force, a spirit of independence which amounted indeed to a lack of discipline, and the lack of armour and ammunition of the 'Continental Army' was well calculated to strike despair into the heart of an officer who had in his youth worshipped the fittings and equipment of disciplined European troops. He said 'No army was ever in a condition so deplorable!' and he had a foundation for pessimism. A British officer wrote home:

'The rebel army are in so wretched a condition as to clothing and accoutrements that I believe no nation ever saw such a set of tatterdemalions. There are few coats among them but that are out at elbows, and in a whole regiment there is scarce a whole pair of breeches.'

On the other side Boston was full of picked regular troops under famous generals. To starve them out seemed the only hope, and as their one way of getting provisions was to send out marauding parties

## *The Siege of Boston (1775-1776)*

by sea to land on the coasts and carry off cattle and stores, Washington had all cattle driven inland. 'I have done and shall do,' he wrote to his brother John Augustine, 'everything in my power to distress them.' As it was rumoured that Gage threw captured officers into the common gaol, Washington threatened to do the same with British officers caught, and wrote to Gage to remonstrate. Gage replied that all captives were being treated humanely, although he could recognise no rank that did not come from the King, and by the law of the land these rebels' lives were 'destined to the cord.' Washington replied: 'You affect, Sir, to despise all rank not derived from the same source as your own. I cannot conceive any more honourable than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people.' These sentiments seem neither fresh nor startling now, but they were bold indeed then and mark the beginnings of modern history. If Washington said but little, he spoke to the point.

Ethan Allen, who has been called the 'Robin Hood' of the American Revolution, after capturing Ticonderoga, and winning many brilliant successes, was taken prisoner in attempting to surprise and take Montreal in Canada, and he was treated by his captors as an ordinary outlaw. In red wool cap, deer-skin jacket and hunting boots he appeared before a British officer, who asked him with much curiosity if he was that 'Colonel Allen' who had taken Ticonderoga. 'I told him I was that very man,' relates the rebel, 'and he shook his cane over my head, calling me many hard names, among which he frequently used the word "rebel." ' Ethan Allen

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was put in irons and taken to England on a man-of-war, with the prospect of Tyburn gallows before him.

Such acts as Ethan Allen's unauthorised and reckless attempt to surprise Montreal did no good and were the despair of Washington, who never relaxed his efforts to obtain discipline and coordination, and by establishing officers of the first abilities over the troops he gradually trained them to some resemblance to a real army, instead of very large bands of brigands. From childhood he was a martinet in military matters.

Another great thing he did was to get the various provinces to lay aside local jealousies and rivalries and think as Americans. In his first Order to the army he stated that the soldiers raised by the various colonies were now the troops of the United Provinces of North America, so that one 'hoped that all distinctions of colonies will be laid aside, so that one and the same spirit may animate the whole and the only contest be who shall render . . . the most essential service to the great and common cause in which all are engaged.'

His 'raw material,' which left so much to be desired from the point of view of the cast-iron military mind and burned with a zeal sometimes inconvenient, had on the other hand qualities of faith and doggedness that no mere professionalism could create or obtain. Those bygone wars pale before the horrors of the wars of to-day—the wars of the Age of Machinery—but they brought manhood out in much the same way, if they did not destroy it so fatally; and although they had not to face the worst

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engines of destruction of modern invention the colonists were without any of the conveniences of modern warfare—long guns, railway lines, airships for reconnoitring, or even respectable roads.

The advantages of stores and equipment were markedly with the British, of course, at the beginning, although the colonists were better placed for remedying these disadvantages. The colonial army as Washington gradually moulded it was on a Cromwellian model, and was to show how greatly piety and sobriety count in warfare. General Lee, cynical and sceptical like nearly all educated people of his age, laughed when he heard of the days of prayer and fasting, and said, shaking his head, 'God is on the side of the heaviest battalions!' It is an old mocking saying, not always true.

Washington thought almost as little of the American forces at one time as did his foes:

'I have often thought,' he wrote, 'how much happier I should have been if, instead of accepting the command under such circumstances I had taken my musket on my shoulder and entered the ranks; or, if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country and lived in a wigwam.'

However, after months of patient training and equipping, on the 4th of March, the anniversary of the 'Boston Massacre,' he determined to make an attack on that town. On the night of the 3d breast-works were to be stealthily thrown up on Dorchester Heights and be so strengthened that by the morning of the 4th it would be too late for the enemy to do anything. Putnam was to make a simultaneous

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attack on the other side of the town, with 4,000 troops. The plan was brilliantly carried out, and when on the morning of the 4th the British, entirely taken by surprise, saw the redoubts which had sprung up in the night on Dorchester Heights they saw that, on this second occasion, they must dislodge the rebels or leave the town. Was it to be a new battle of Bunker's Hill? Howe, who had succeeded Gage in command, remarked:

'The rebels have done more work in one night than my whole army would have done in one month.'

He began an assault of the Heights by land and sea, but a storm coming to the aid of the Americans, as it had done to England in the days of the Great Armada, they were able to make their position almost impregnable before they could be attacked. It was one of the dark moments in British history, and the garrison of Boston found itself check-mated. To take Dorchester Heights now was not to be thought of, and yet they could not stay in the town to be destroyed by colonial artillery. They must therefore go, but they could not capitulate to rebel subjects of their King—rather die at their posts. One wonders what sort of jests the gay garrison exchanged now, for although I have said that they would rather die at their posts than capitulate to 'rebels,' we know very well that that was not the sort of remark that was made by educated Britons in the eighteenth century. They would probably say, as Britons have always had a habit of doing at grave moments: 'We shall have to get out of this, but how on earth can we do it? Generals Howe, Burgoyne and Clinton send plenipotentiaries to ask for terms from these

## *The Siege of Boston (1775-1776)*

boors in smocks who have managed to catch us in this nice trap? And how ever shall we address our note? We can't possibly use the official names they have taken. General Washington! General Putnam! It's a nuisance!'

Finally Howe, without recognising the rebels as an equal opponent to whom submission could be made, determined to depart. Famine had already appeared in the town, and sickness was rife, and this problem of capitulation without submission had to be solved in the one way possible—simply walking out, exposed perhaps to a murderous fire from the Heights. Washington was indirectly but clearly informed of Howe's intention and warned that if the Americans fired the British army would set fire to Boston before leaving it. All the 'Tories,' as the colonial loyalists in the town were called by their fellow colonials, took the precaution of departing with the British, and so earned for themselves the execration of the Continental Army. On the 17th of the month the whole party embarked on seventy-eight ships in the harbour. Washington in indignation remarked of the defaulting 'Tories' that they chose to commit themselves 'to the waves at a tempestuous season rather than meet their offended countrymen.' It was certainly an event to startle the loyalists—it had never entered their heads that Great Britain could be defeated by the small, miserably equipped army that had invested it for the last year. At 'Home' in the House of Lords the Duke of Manchester said:

'The army of Great Britain, equipped with every possible essential of war; a chosen army with chosen

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officers, backed by the power of a mighty fleet, sent to correct revolted subjects; sent to chastise a resisting city; sent to assert Great Britain's authority—has for many tedious months been imprisoned within that town by the Provincial army, who, their watchful guards, permitted them no inlet to the country, who braved all their efforts and defied all their skill and ability in war could ever attempt.'

• A unanimous vote of thanks to Washington was passed by Congress, and it was ordered that a gold medal should be struck in commemoration of the fall of the town and should bear on it the effigy of Washington.

## CHAPTER VIII: *The Declaration of Independence (1776)*

THE desirability of cutting the colonies adrift from the mother country was now openly mooted all over the country. Great Britain no longer seemed to be invincible and in any case as it was necessary to fight her it would be safer to do so as an independent State than as rebels. Rebels if caught were subject to every indignity of treatment, and moreover foreign countries were not likely to grant any aid unless such a severance were contemplated. This idea of obtaining aid abroad was coming to be a favourite one, and the scheme which obtained most approval was that of turning to France, whose heart was still burning to avenge the loss of India and Canada. It shocked some minds at first, but once admitted it made way.

On the 7th June, 1776, the delegates from Virginia, who had already moved for the declaration of independence, moved in Congress that measures should be taken immediately for securing the assistance of foreign powers. A committee was appointed for drawing up the Declaration of Independence, a committee composed of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert R. Livingston and Thomas Jefferson, the great Francophile, whom the others



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entrusted with the work. Jefferson's 'Declaration of Independence' was adopted substantially as he drafted it, although it went through a fierce fire of criticism, and it is one of the most vital political documents of history. (Congress ended its momentous debate on the 4th July, 1776, 'Independence Day,' and adopted most of the revolutionary propositions of Thomas Jefferson. We will quote, without comment, a large portion of this famous Declaration:

'We hold these truths to be self-evident,' it ran, after a short introduction, 'that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. . . . When a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States.'

Here a list of the injuries and usurpations of George III is 'submitted to a candid world'—refusing his assent to wholesome and necessary laws, dissolving the Houses of Representatives 'for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people; refusing to allow other Assemblies to be elected after he had thus dissolved the old ones, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise'; discouraging immigrations and so keeping the population down; keeping up a standing army in the colonies in time of peace; and making the military power independent of and superior to the civil power. 'He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts a pretended legislation for quar-

# *The Declaration of Independence*

tering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us in many cases of the benefits of trial by jury; for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies; for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the powers of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.'

'He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.'

A list of unparental actions follows, for Great Britain had been 'deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity.'

Jefferson's next sentences were not adopted by Congress for the Declaration, but they are of interest :

'We must endeavour to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. We might have been a free and great people together; but a communication of grandeur and of freedom, it seems, is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it! The road to happiness and to glory is open to us too. We will tread it apart from them.'

The Declaration ran somewhat differently here:

'We must therefore acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.'

The famous document thus concluded:

'We therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, *free and independent states*; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great

## George Washington

Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that *as free and independent states* they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which *independent states* may of right do.

‘And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honour.’

The news that the deed was done, and that by the action of Congress the long-talked of separation from Great Britain had become a fact, to which a large number of the colonists had engaged their honour, was carried all over Philadelphia and its suburbs by the ‘Bell of Liberty,’ a bell of English manufacture fixed in the State-House and strangely enough bearing the appropriate inscription: ‘Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof.’

The revolutionaries in New York, on hearing the news, gave way to various acts of jubilation, including the destruction of a leaden statue of George III on the Bowling Green. It was broken up into bullets ‘to be used in the cause of independence.’

Washington was at New York when he received a copy of the Declaration of Independence and was informed that Congress had actually adopted it. He was extremely glad and at 6 o'clock in the evening of the 9th July, 1776, he had it read to the troops at the head of each brigade. ‘The General hopes,’ he said in the Order of the Day, ‘that this important event will serve as a fresh incentive to every officer and soldier to act with fidelity and courage, as knowing that now the peace and safety of his country depend, under God, solely on the successes of our arms.’

## *The Declaration of Independence*

It was a dark and sad day for Great Britain, for many people when they came to hear of it thought that an irreparable blow had been dealt her. The Declaration of Independence was in no way accepted as ultimate, but it was realised that the mother country stood in danger of losing for ever what had come to seem of late years (in Chatham's words) the brightest jewel in the Crown.

It was some time before the news got to Great Britain, but in America it flew from town to town in a very short space of time and caused frantic excitement. The rebels at least had little doubt that a new State had started on its course, and a few of them, like Jefferson, believed that a great future lay before it, but even Jefferson, we think, would have been astounded if he could have seen his country after the course of a century. Which of the founders of the American republic would not have been amazed if he could have foreseen that in a little over a hundred years' time it would be the equal of the oldest and most famous States of Europe? What in still another hundred years will this splendid child of Great Britain have become? Through the United States of America, it may well be that the future of civilisation is to the British race.

## CHAPTER IX: *The War of Independence (1776-1781)*

**A**FTER the evacuation of Boston by the British troops, Washington had left Cambridge for New York, where the next act in the drama was to be played. As Lee had been making wholesale arrests of 'Tories' in that city and his views of the sacrosanctity of the Governor were well known, Governor Tryon and his friends had thought it prudent to take refuge on a British man-of-war in the harbour.

Washington arrived in the city on 13th April, 1776, and the position appeared to him, and with reason, much more desperate than that at Boston had done. In fact the tables were to be turned here. Within the city were the American patriots, without a great besieging force. His one encouragement, one that never left him, was the thought of the justness of his Cause.

While the Americans at Philadelphia were busy with the Declaration of Independence, Great Britain, little dreaming of this awful blow awaiting her, had decided, only too late, to make a supreme effort. A large force was to be sent out to reduce the colonists if necessary, but the plan had a silver lining, for Lord Howe, who was given the command of this



## Washington praying at Valley Forge

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## *War of Independence (1776-81)*

expedition, was instructed to try the effect of offers of compromise and reconciliation.

On leaving Boston, Lord Howe, on his side, had gone to Canada to obtain reinforcements, and he now arrived off New York with his brother, Admiral Howe, a few days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In reply to his request, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and others went to Staten Island to confer with him, but the chief object of their visit was to tell him of the step taken, and assure him politely of the colonists' intention to abide by their action. They departed, leaving Howe clear that his instructions were so much waste paper and that he should now have to fight to a finish.

Both sides strained every nerve, and—another step that had cost a good deal of debate—Franklin was despatched to beg help from the old enemy of the colonists and of England, France. Washington solemnly addressed his army, saying:

'The time is now near at hand which must determine whether Americans are to be free men or slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own; whether their houses and farms are to be pillaged and destroyed and themselves consigned to a state of wretchedness from which no human efforts will deliver them. The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this army. . . . We have therefore to resolve to conquer or to die.'

In August began the duel for New York with the British resolve to capture Brooklyn Heights on Long Island, commanding the city. To prevent this, Washington sent 5,000 men—all he could spare—to



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hold the Heights, and on the 21st 15,000 British troops proceeded to the attack. For seven days the struggle continued and just when the Americans, with nearly half their men lost, saw nothing before them but surrender, a storm came to their rescue and they were able to get away almost unharmed. Under cover of the darkness Washington got the detachment away from the Heights and recrossed the river from Long Island to New York. For 48 hours he never closed his eyes and scarcely dismounted from his horse, and so achieved what has always been considered an almost miraculous retreat. Of course, it meant leaving the Heights for the British to occupy, and it then became impossible to hold New York, just as the British had found it impossible to hold Boston when Dorchester Heights were captured by the Americans. Both Washington and Putnam, neither of them fond of half-measures, and both having staked their all, in lands and hopes, on this gigantic combat, wanted to destroy New York before evacuating it, as it was terrible to think what a splendid centre it would be for the British and what comfortable and secure winter quarters it offered them. Its possession meant an indefinite prolongation of the combat. The Commander-in-Chief, however, thought it right to mention the matter to Congress and Congress could not frame its heart to consent. There was therefore nothing for it but to get out with as little loss as possible, under the guns of the foe, and this was another record achievement of Washington; nothing but his personal influence, even to the extent of facing the fugitive with pointed pistols, saved the retreat from being a flight of terrified

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men. These two manœuvres, the rescue of the detachment on Brooklyn Heights and the retreat from New York, perhaps won Washington more renown in the British army, where such achievements were duly appreciated, than among his fellow-countrymen, who were inclined to look principally at the facts of losses and gains, and as unskilled citizens rather than professional soldiers.

The retreat did not end with the evacuation of New York, for the army was then gradually pushed up the Hudson River, and the colonists began to be discontented with Washington. He wrote to his brother: 'I am wearied almost to death with the retrograde movement of things; and I solemnly protest that a pecuniary reward of £20,000 a year would not induce me to undergo what I do, and, after all, perhaps to lose my character; as it is impossible under such a variety of distressing circumstances to conduct matters agreeably to public expectation.'

He still believed in ultimate success.

When the British attempted to surround him between the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers, a further retreat had to be made in the utmost haste, and this time a large quantity of stores and ammunition had to be abandoned. Lee would not come to his aid and the retreat was continued to Trenton. The British thus held New York, nearly the whole of the Jerseys and part of Pennsylvania, while the colonists' great plan of raising Canada against British rule had failed miserably. Burgoyne had suppressed any tendency to revolt in Canada, and was now to be expected to descend with his army on the revolted colonies. So hopeless did the American cause seem

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that all but the most ardent returned to their allegiance to Great Britain. Washington anticipated that a time would come for retreat into Virginia and ultimately for retirement across the Alleghany Mountains, and unlike so many other rich colonists with everything at stake he determined never to surrender, never to make terms, never to waver before British offers of reconciliation. 'If it becomes necessary,' he said proudly to one who criticised him, 'we will retreat over every river and mountain in America.'

His immediate fear was that Philadelphia would fall, and 'Old Put,' the 'Grand Old Man' of the Cause, was placed in command there, while Congress adjourned to Baltimore.

Full of wearing anxiety but ever hoping that the country would send him reinforcements, Washington in another marvellous retreat crossed the Delaware. Thomas Payne tells us how: 'With a handful of men we sustained an orderly retreat for near an hundred miles, brought off our ammunition, all our field-pieces, the greater part of our stores, and had four rivers to pass. None can say that our retreat was precipitate, for we were three weeks in performing it, that the country might have time to come in. Twice we marched back to meet the enemy.'

All this time, Lee was not dealing fairly with Washington, but dawdling about with his troops, and many of the colonial party rejoiced when he was surprised in a tavern by British cavalry and taken prisoner. Washington was perhaps more vexed than grieved at the incident, due, as he remarked, to Lee's

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own folly and imprudence. It helped to show Congress what Lee was and to restore to Washington that confidence he enjoyed before the fall of New York. Reinforcements began to come in and he was granted extraordinary powers of dictatorship. The strengthening of his hands led him to decide on a surprise attack on the foe, Howe and Cornwallis having gone into winter quarters at New York, it not being the practice in that age to fight in the winter.

Christmas night was fixed on for the recrossing of the Delaware, and while Washington recrossed the dangerously swollen stream, amid floating ice-blocks, in the dead of the night and in a tempest of snow and wind, above Trenton, Putnam and troops from Philadelphia crossed it below Burlington. Generals Ewing and Cadwalader, who were also to cross, could not do so. Hessian troops in the British service were guarding the river, and they were completely taken aback by the reappearance of Washington at this season. Trenton at once fell into the Americans' hands, with over 1,000 persons and large quantities of stores and artillery. Something like a panic followed, and Howe at once sent Cornwallis off to Princeton to bring troops out of their winter quarters. He imagined that he would catch Washington when he came up with him at the Assanpink on the 2d of January, 1777. As he was retiring for the night, he said:

'The old fox can't make his escape now; for, with the Delaware behind him so filled with floating ice that he cannot cross, we have him completely surrounded. To-morrow morning, fresh and strong, we

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will fall upon him and take him and his ragamuffins all at once.' In vain those who knew Washington assured him that there was little likelihood of Washington, whatever happened, being found in the morning. Cornwallis knew his ground and went to sleep in faith and peace. In the morning the British found the stream hard frozen and Washington and his 'ragamuffins' gone. The ground between here and Princeton, which had been almost an impassable bog the night before, hardened as if macadamised, and Washington hastened on to Princeton, where after a fierce fight the British garrison surrendered to him. He would then have proceeded to take the great depôt at New Brunswick, and that he would do so was the first sad thought of Cornwallis on awaking that cold January morning, but Washington's force was too exhausted to carry out this tempting plan. However, the two victories, Trenton and Princeton, had an enormous effect on public opinion. Washington was winning for himself in Great Britain the fame of a great rebel leader like Spartacus—for the eighteenth century, as we have seen, was fond of classical allusions—or even of an heroic Hannibal, doomed in the end to failure, but meanwhile threatening the entire British Empire with disruption. In America, on the other hand, and on the Continent of Europe, he was likened, not to the invader Hannibal, but to the consul Fabius, whose retreats and delays saved Rome from Hannibal and have been famous through all ages and times. The brightest hopes were entertained of his ultimate success, and the French in particular began to give lavish if unofficial aid. Beaumarchais, the author of *The Marriage of Fi-*

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garo, organised expeditions of aid, and the young Marquis de Lafayette came over in person at this point, and met Washington at Philadelphia, whither Washington proceeded after his exploits at Princeton. Lafayette had been attracted to the revolutionary cause by Franklin, who found aristocratic France, on the eve of the revolution that was to bring their own order to an end, ripe for sympathy with a movement that put into action the social and political creeds of their beloved Rousseau. Rousseau had preached the doctrine of the '*contrat social*,' a contract between governors and governed for the benefit of the latter, and the consequent right of the people to resume the sovereignty they had confided to their rulers in trust. The American colonies of Great Britain had just resumed this authority, so long vested in the sovereigns of Great Britain, and France was submerged in a wave of enthusiasm for this magnificent deed, now apparently to proceed to a triumphant issue. It was the irony of fate that sympathy and help should come to the American democracy from an aristocracy that was so soon to rue the day when it had first lent an ear to revolutionary doctrines and had listened so fondly and so lightly to the preaching of the Rights of Man. It was soon to learn that it is a matter of extreme peril to touch the foundations of government. The French aristocracy carried out a very great work in extreme lightness of heart and without in the least realising the inevitable results of its enthusiastic speculations—results for which it was soon called upon to pay with its best blood. Meanwhile, it gave priceless aid to the Americans.

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Great Britain formed a plan of campaign for 1777 that should have brought America to her feet, namely for Burgoyne to march south from Canada to the upper Hudson River and join Howe, who was to come north to meet him, and thus cut the rebel army in two. Unfortunately for the success of this masterly scheme, Burgoyne suffered a disastrous defeat on his way at Bennington, where the Republican General Stark, despatched by Washington to check Burgoyne, is said to have spurred his men to great things. 'Come on, boys, and conquer the Red-coats,' he is reported to have cried, 'or Molly Stark will be a widow!' The Republicans utilised the moral effects of this battle to turn the tables and cut off Burgoyne. Howe, for his part, was on his way to join Burgoyne when Washington met him at the River Brandywine on 8th September, with only 11,000 men to his 18,000, and on the 11th the British general inflicted a signal defeat on Washington. A panic followed on the Republican side, and Congress again fled from Philadelphia, but Washington merely retreated, with his usual calm patience and resignation. He stopped at Germantown and planned another surprise attack, on Howe, on the night of 2d October, but after a brilliant manoeuvre a heavy fog baffled him and he was obliged to fall back again, whereupon Philadelphia was compelled to submit to the entry of the British army. There was much wailing in America over the fate of this city; only the wise Franklin, when informed that Howe had taken Philadelphia, replied mysteriously: 'No! Philadelphia has taken Howe!' ✓

And so it proved. Hardly had the city fallen than

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news arrived that Burgoyne, lacking the aid Howe should have brought him, had surrendered with his whole army on 6th October, 1777, to the American General Gates at Saratoga.

Making the best of a bad job, Howe took up winter quarters at Philadelphia, and made himself as comfortable as he could, while Washington established himself at Valley Forge, twenty miles away, to watch the enemy and to endure all the hardships of cold, privation and disease among his men. It is told that one day, observing the critical condition of a famished soldier, he said to him:

‘Go to my table and help yourself!’

‘I cannot,’ replied the soldier, ‘I am on guard.’ Taking his rifle from him, Washington just said ‘Go!’ indicating that he would take his place. The men were without clothes, without blankets, without shoes (so much so that their marches might be traced by their bleeding feet), without food, without shelter but the huts they built, and yet they had come to suffer these things without a murmur. They had caught the spirit of Washington’s patriotism, and also they had become inspired by that feeling which made the soldiers of Cæsar and Napoleon march on through whatever hardships and afflictions might befall them so long as their General bade them.

England declared war on France in 1778 and so ended an impossible position, and as there had existed throughout the eighteenth century a ‘Family Compact’ between the Bourbon sovereigns of France and Spain, England now had to face the united attack of those powers, and this fact was the salvation of



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America and gradually transformed the nature of the struggle. It amounted indeed to tying Great Britain's hands; it gave infinite encouragement to the Americans; and the substantial aid of France in America was the decisive factor in her winning the war. When it arrived, however, it seemed as if nothing could save America, for Cornwallis with the help of the brilliant cavalry officer Tarleton had overrun the Carolinas and Georgia, and in spite of minor successes and acts of desperate valour, the Republicans were steadily losing. There came, moreover, the treason of Benedict Arnold, once beloved and trusted by Washington. After long and traitorous correspondence, Benedict Arnold stole over into the British camp and accepted a position in the British army that was fighting his fellow-countrymen, betraying at the same time all that he knew of the Republican plans and resources, and arranging to hand over West Point, where Washington had placed him in command. He used to meet Major André, the emissary of Sir Henry Clinton, who had succeeded Howe as Commander-in-Chief, at midnight, and he drew up a plan for a feigned attack by the British and apparent surrender by himself. André was captured in one of these missions by three American yeomen, and promptly hanged as a spy, while his papers, including those compromising Arnold, were sent to Washington. Arnold managed to escape, and received a general's commission in the British army and proved one of the bitterest foes of his old comrades in arms. He has been called the 'Judas Iscariot' of the Cause.

Great Britain after Saratoga had offered every

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possible concession to her revolted colonies, but when France and Spain came on to the scene the day of reconciliation was felt to be over, and both parties felt also that the end was approaching. Great Britain had her hands ever fuller. The French sent ever increasing aid to the Americans. Rochambeau landed with an army in 1780 and finally the French West Indian fleet in 1781 appeared in the Chesapeake under De Grasse. Weary of waiting Washington may well have been, but this would never have nerved him to the great coup he was now to make, namely the capture of Cornwallis in Yorktown. He saw clearly that the moment had come, that after all this weary time when all he could do was to preserve his army and retire, the naval assistance which De Grasse gave him permitted him at last to strike. Calling at Mount Vernon for the first time since the beginning of the war, he bade farewell to his wife, telling her that 'he was on his way to seek a battle, an unequal though glorious contest from which he might never return.'

On the 30th September he and Rochambeau, the French commander, held the heights above Yorktown, and soon the French fleet under De Grasse filled the harbour. On the 6th October he himself put a match to the first cannon and a bombardment terrific for those times started. Washington's exposure of his person in warfare was always extraordinary, and never more than in this bombardment, in spite of the expostulations of his officers. When an aide-de-camp ventured to remark that he was in a very exposed spot, he remarked somewhat shortly:

'If you think so, you are at liberty to stand back!'

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As at the time of Braddock's rout in his youth, balls flew round him and he stood unharmed, a charmed, heroic figure, in the thickest of the fray. Washington in a battle was a sight to call forth memories of heroes of old.

The 17th October, 1781, was the greatest day in his life, and perhaps the happiest, for on that day he received a flag of truce from Cornwallis, who could hold out no longer. On the 19th Cornwallis accepted his conditions of surrender. Who can tell his feelings at this moment! The weary years of war and misery were over; the separation from Great Britain was an irrevocable fact, her stern parental authority was thrown off for ever, and who could say what would be the future of his country? Not Washington! He was no political prophet that he could foresee the glorious future of the United States. He only knew that he and his fellow citizens had won something very precious, Liberty, and that in their own hands it now lay to make that Liberty a permanent possession.

'My brave fellows,' he said to the soldiers, 'let no sensation of satisfaction for the triumphs you have gained induce you to insult your fallen enemy. Let no shouting, no clamorous huzzaing, increase their mortification. Posterity will huzza for us.'

Cornwallis, unable to face the music, pleaded indisposition, and O'Hara carried out the surrender. The garrison of 7,000 marched out between the serried rows of American and French troops and surrendered to Major-General Lincoln. He conducted them to a field where the ceremony of grounding their arms was carried out, and twenty-eight British

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captains handed over the twenty-eight flags of their companies.

A courier was then sent post-haste to the Congress at Philadelphia. Arriving after midnight, as the night-watchmen were going their rounds, he gave them the word, and soon the cry:

‘One o’clock—Cornwallis is taken!’ roused the inhabitants from their beds. The first incredulity gave way to rapture, and the citizens began to ring the city bells and let off artillery. Only the sick stayed in the house that night. Immediately after daybreak Congress assembled and heard Washington’s letter read. Great rejoicing followed and enthusiastic votes of thanks were passed to Washington, Rochambeau, De Grasse and the officers of both armies.

Washington with his usual prudence expostulated that the war was not yet over, but as a matter of fact it was, at least so far as America was concerned.

At Home, the news produced the height of sorrow. To Lord North it was like ‘a ball in the breast.’ He opened his arms and paced wildly up and down the apartment, exclaiming:

‘Oh God! It is all over!’ He was compelled to resign, and Rockingham succeeded him as Prime Minister and began negotiations for a treaty of peace with America.

By the Treaty of Paris, signed on the 30th November, 1782, Great Britain recognised the independence of her thirteen rebel colonies. All the forts were evacuated and the army returned to Britain, whereupon Washington disbanded the Republican army.

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‘With a heart full of love and gratitude,’ he said, ‘I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former have been glorious and honourable. I cannot come to each of you to take my leave, but shall be obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand.’

As the soldiers advanced one by one, the tears started into Washington’s eyes, and the long ceremony took place in utter silence.

## CHAPTER X: *First Citizen*

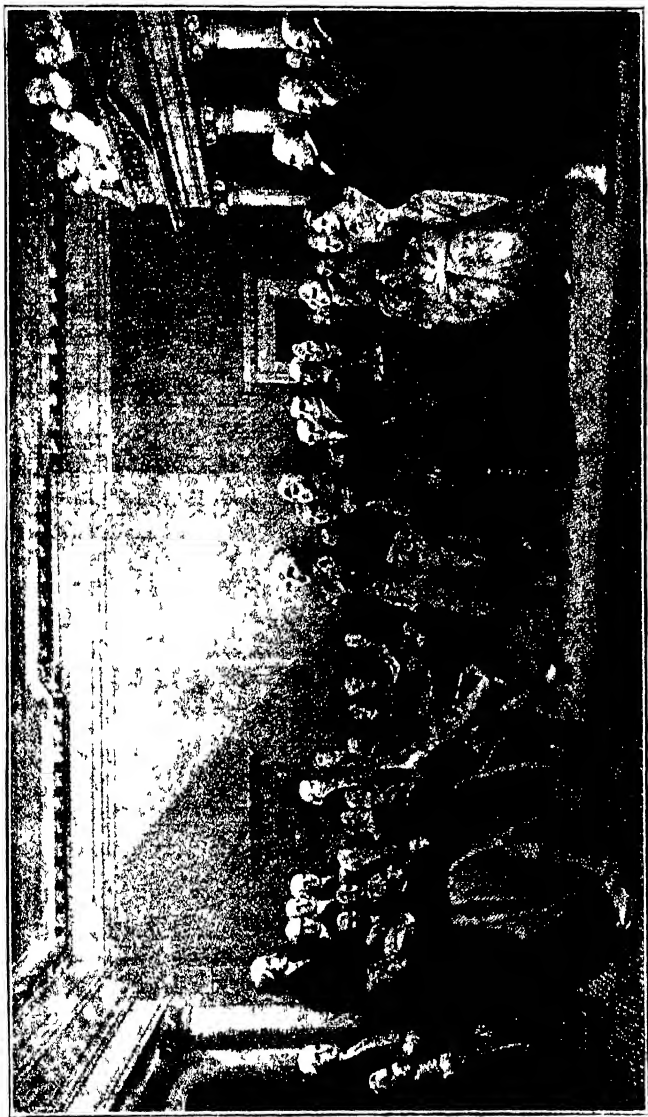
WASHINGTON after disbanding the army went to Annapolis to surrender his commission to Congress, and he had a triumphal march thither. Every town, hamlet and farm he passed cheered him wildly, and firing of cannon, bands, flags all acclaimed the Father of his Country, the founder of American independence. Congress received him with unreserved enthusiasm and distinction.

To a certain extent there was reason in his fears that the War of Independence was not yet over, as but for his personal action the expulsion of the British would have been but an episode in long and bloody struggles. We know only too well to-day how hard are the steps of revolutions, what they cost to wage and how barren their victories may be, for it is easier to pull down than to build up. The brilliant soldier of fortune is common enough, but the constructive statesman with a personality strong enough to give his views weight is the rarest and most precious of people. If Washington had been a demagogue, the thirteen colonies now independent might never have been able to agree on a federal constitution, and either he might have established his own personal rule, like Cæsar or Napoleon, or, more probably, Britain and France and even Spain, might have once more matched their might together

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and the strongest taken the old British colonies as their prize. The American revolution was one of the few successful democratic revolutions of the modern world, and it was successful because it was led by a man like Washington, who had no private ambition or revenge to satisfy, who had no wish to destroy for the sake of destroying, who knew what bounds must be set to liberty, and who knew, finally, the limits of what the State can do for the individual. He never encouraged his followers to think that every ill flesh is heir to would be abolished when America shook off British rule; he never incited them to madness by descriptions of their wrongs. He was no talker, and if he has left behind him none of those magnanimous sayings which endear a hero to posterity and impose on his own age, he has done none of the harm that with a touch of the temperament of the actor or orator he would assuredly have done. His countrymen have reason to be sincerely grateful that their Founder had no touch of picturesque Cæsarism in his composition.

— Immediately after laying down his command, he retired to Mount Vernon, where he announced his intention of finishing his days in the cultivation of his estate. He began the old pre-war round of rising at four o'clock in the morning and seeing to the affairs of his plantation, and visiting his friends, but he could not help keeping a more watchful eye than ever before on the trend of public events, and he was more alive to the need for developing American resources. Among the many great public measures which he supported was a plan for improving the navigation of the James and Potomac Rivers, and



Washington resigning his Commission at Annapolis, December 23, 1783

*Engraved by J. B. Schreyer*





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when the General Assembly wished to present him with shares in the profitable new concern, he refused, saying:

'For the sake of money, which indeed I never coveted from my country, I may lose the power to do her some service which may be worth more than all money.' The value of the shares, therefore, was by his wish appropriated to a University within the bounds of the present District of Columbia and to a college subsequently called Washington College in Rockbridge County. As ever he gave much to the poor.

But this rural peace was not for Washington. The thirteen colonies needed a constitution. There was no entity to treat with foreign powers, there was no taxing body, and there was no supreme legislature; and discharged soldiers and other unruly spirits were therefore beginning to use their talents in unlawful directions. Congress had done its work and had no power to rule the State; indeed there was no State.

So strong was local feeling in America at that time, that few people wished for a central State, and it took the masses of the people some time to see that a federation was necessary. What powers of control it was desirable to give the new central State to be established was not decided at that time nor ever completely in the history of the United States, for before ever the Union came into existence we may see the two parties of Federalists and 'State Rights' or 'Republicans' or 'Democratic Republicans' as this latter party came to be called later, and later again 'Democrats.' The Federalists

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wanted a strong central State, the Democrats wanted large measures of local self-government.

\* A Constituent Assembly met at Philadelphia in 1787 and in a few months' time drew up the constitution of the United States, much as it is to-day. It was formed in outline after the English pattern of three Estates,—but instead of King, Lords and Commons, there was to be President, Senate and House of Representatives. The original constitution provided an Electoral College, (still retained although with modified functions), to elect the President. The Senators were to be chosen by the legislatures of the States, and each State was to be equally represented. They were to be elected for six years, a third of their number resigning in rotation and giving place to a new third portion. The members of the House of Representatives were to be chosen directly by the people on the basis of almost universal male suffrage, and to hold office for two years only. The President was to hold office for four years, when he might be re-elected to a further term of service. As a concession to 'States' Rights' the various States which composed the Union were made independent except for foreign policy, taxation, coinage and certain legislative principles.

Ever since the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson had been busy on the penal code, and he substantially accepted that of Great Britain as he found it, being specially careful not to alter words and phrases which time had consecrated and lawyers had long agreed to interpret after a certain fashion; and to this practical sagacity of

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Jefferson the United States owes a great debt. Some features, however, and important features, of the English law were completely altered. The descent of property to the eldest son was abolished, for America did not want a landed aristocracy. The death sentence was limited to the blackest crimes, and religious toleration was extended not only to all Christians, as some people wanted, but to 'Jew and Gentile, Christian and Mahometan, Hindoo and infidel of every denomination,' as Thomas Jefferson triumphantly relates. Jefferson wanted to abolish slavery, to introduce compulsory elementary education and many other revolutionary measures, but the times were not yet ripe for such innovations.

When the moment came for choosing a President of the United States of America, there was no doubt as to the people's choice. George Washington was inaugurated therefore on 30th April, 1789, and his sensations on thus being dragged once more from his peaceful home at Mount Vernon he thus described in a letter to a friend:

'My movement to the chair of Government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to his place of execution, so unwilling am I, in the evening of life, nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties, without the competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination which are necessary to manage the helm.'

Another triumphal journey, in his own carriage-and-four, from Mount Vernon to New York, a royal reception in that city, then state processions in a chariot-and-six with out-riders and liveried servants,

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and then the great ceremony of his inauguration. His speech was a notable one. 'When I contemplate,' he said, 'the interposition of Providence, as it was visibly manifested in guiding us through the Revolution, in preparing us for the reception of a general government, and in conciliating the goodwill of the people of America towards one another after its adoption, I feel most oppressed and almost overwhelmed with a sense of the Divine munificence. I feel that nothing is due to my personal agency in all those complicated and wonderful events except what can simply be attributed to the exertions of an honest <sup>man</sup> zeal for the good of my country.'

In 1790 the seat of Government was removed from New York to Philadelphia, but Washington wished it to be established at the mouth of the Potomac, as it ultimately was—at 'Washington.'

Chateaubriand, one of the most ardent disciples of Rousseau, came over to America, the land of his dreams, the dwelling-place as he and his friends imagined of Man unsophisticated and spoiled by civilisation. 'There is nothing old in America,' he says, 'but the woods, the children of the earth, and Liberty, mother of every human society: that is well worth monuments and ancestors!' His stories of his adventures have not quite the validity of legal documents, but he had a charming literary style and he represents almost as well as Jefferson the ideals that lay in the hearts of many of the American revolutionaries. He relates at length an interview he claims to have had with Washington in 1791,—three years after the fall of the Bastille and outbreak of the French Revolution.

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‘When I arrived at Philadelphia,’ he says, ‘the great Washington was not there. I was obliged to wait for a fortnight. He returned. I saw him pass in a carriage drawn with rapidity by four spirited horses, driven four-in-hand. Washington, according to my ideas, was necessarily Cincinnatus; Cincinnatus in a carriage disturbed somewhat my Roman Republic of 296 B. C. Could the Dictator Washington be anything but a rustic goading forward his oxen and holding the plough-share? But when I presented myself with my letter of introduction at the house of this great man, I found all the simplicity of the old Roman.’

In 1793 Washington, again much against his will, was reelected President for a further period of four years, and in this second term of office he made treaties with foreign countries and with the Indians, and dealt with all the important measures that arose, like a trained statesman and administrator. He got through an enormous amount of work, and he required his staff to work hard. He gave no munificent rewards to his adherents, like Napoleon, and what acts of generosity he performed were always out of his own money.

He said once about a friend: ‘As George Washington I would do this man any kindness in my power; but as President of the United States I can do nothing.’ He created a tradition of public faithfulness, and parsimony even, for his successors, and he also created a traditional limit for the President’s term of office by retiring at the end of his second period of office.

Refusing every representation from his friends, he

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returned to Mount Vernon, there to end his days three years later.

Contracting a chill, he died within a few days, on December, 1799, and was buried in the family vault at Mount Vernon.

His death seemed a national calamity, and the whole country went into mourning. Nor was the sorrow confined to America. Napoleon ordered his army to attach crêpe to all its standards and flags, and the British admiral Lord Bridport, when he heard the news, had his flag lowered to half-mast.

As he desired in his farewell address to Congress, when definitely laying down his powers, the free nation which was the work of his hands has been 'sacredly maintained,' and that largely because the American nation have remembered his counsels. 'In all the changes to which you may be invited,' he told them, 'remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; . . . and remember especially that for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigour as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a Government . . . its surest guardian.'

For foreign policy, his last counsels to his people were to steer clear alike of friendships and enmities with other countries, to make themselves strong and hold aloof from the entanglements of the Old World.

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'There can be no greater error,' he said, 'than to expect or calculate upon real favours from nation to nation.'

Chateaubriand made a very just contrast of Washington and Napoleon, the two great generals of the two new democracies. The genius of the latter, he said, seemed of a higher flight than that of the former. Washington did not surpass human stature, or astonish mankind by deeds beyond their comprehension. He did not travel with winged speed from Egypt to Austria and from Spain to Russia, and defeat the most celebrated captains of the age and nations old and renowned. 'He defends himself with a handful of citizens in a country without historical memories and without fame. . . . Something silent envelops the actions of Washington; he acts slowly; he seems to feel that he is entrusted with the liberty of the future, and he fears to compromise it. Not his own destinies inspire this hero of a new sort, but those of his country; he will not stake that which does not belong to him. But from this profound obscurity what light is to burst! Search the unknown woods where Washington's sword shone, and what will you find? Tombs? No, a world! Washington left the United States for trophy on his battle-field. . . . This man, who made little personal impression because he was natural and in just proportions, merged his own existence in that of his country; his glory is the common inheritance of growing civilisation; his fame rises like one of those sanctuaries whence flows an un-failing spring for the People.'

This is a similar note to that struck by a later



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President of the United States, Dr. Woodrow Wilson, in a speech on Independence Day, 1918, at the tomb of Washington:

‘From this green hillside,’ he said, ‘we also ought to be able to see with comprehending eyes that world that lies about us, and should conceive anew the purposes that must set men free.’

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The best edition of Washington's writings is that of W. C. FORD (1889-1893).



*Extracts from  
Washington's Writings*



## *Rules of Conduct*

(These rules are taken from Washington's schoolboy exercise books. They show the standard of good manners and morals of his time.)

1. Every action in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those present.

2. In the presence of others sing not to yourself with a humming noise, nor drum with your fingers or feet.

3. Sleep not when others speak, sit not when others stand, speak not when you should hold your peace, walk not when others stop.

4. Turn not your back to others, especially in speaking; jog not the table or desk on which another reads or writes; lean not on any one.

5. Be no flatterer; neither play with any one that delights not to be played with.

6. Read no letters, books, or papers in company; but when there is a necessity for doing it, you must ask leave. Come not near the books or writings of any one so as to read them, unless desired, nor give your opinion of them unasked; also, look not nigh when another is writing a letter.

7. Let your countenance be pleasant, but in serious matters somewhat grave.

8. Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another, though he were your enemy.

9. When you meet with one of greater quality than yourself, stop and retire, especially if it be at a door or any strait place, to give way for him to pass.

10. They that are in dignity, or in office, have in all places precedence; but whilst they are young they ought to respect those that are their equals in birth or other qualities, though they have no public charge.

## *George Washington*

11. It is good manners to prefer them to whom we speak before ourselves, especially if they be above us, with whom in no sort we ought to begin.

12. Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive.

13. In visiting the sick, do not presently play the physician if you be not knowing therein.

14. In writing, or speaking, give to every person his due title, according to his degree and the custom of the place.

15. Strive not with your superiors in argument, but always submit your judgment to others with modesty.

16. Undertake not to teach your equal in the art himself professes: it savors of arrogancy.

17. When a man does all he can, though it succeeds not well, blame not him that did it.

18. Being to advise, or reprehend any one, consider whether it ought to be in public or in private, presently or at some other time, and in what terms to do it; and in reproving show no signs of choler, but do it with sweetness and mildness.

19. Take all admonitions thankfully, in what time or place soever given; but afterwards, not being culpable, take a time and place convenient to let him know it that gave them.

20. Mock not, nor jest at anything of importance; break no jests that are sharp-biting, and if you deliver anything witty and pleasant, abstain from laughing thereat yourself.

21. Wherein you reprove another be unblamable yourself; for example is more prevalent than precepts.

22. Use no reproachful language against any one, neither curse nor revile.

23. Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any.

24. In your apparel be modest, and endeavor to accommodate nature, rather than to procure admiration;

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keep to the fashion of your equals, such as are civil and orderly with respect to times and places.

25. Play not the peacock, looking everywhere about you to see if you be well decked, if your shoes fit well, if your stockings sit neatly, and clothes handsomely.

26. Associate yourself with men of good quality, if you esteem your own reputation, for it is better to be alone than in bad company.

27. Let your conversation be without malice or envy, for it is a sign of a tractable and commendable nature; and in all causes of passion, admit reason to govern.

28. Be not immodest in urging your friend to discover a secret.

29. Utter not base and frivolous things amongst grave and learned men; nor very difficult questions or subjects among the ignorant; nor things hard to be believed.

30. Speak not of doleful things in time of mirth, nor at the table; speak not of melancholy things, as death, and wounds, and if others mention them, change, if you can, the discourse. Tell not your dreams, but to your intimate friend.



## *Journal*

(Extracts from Washington's journal kept during his expedition to the Ohio to interview the French commandant under commission of Governor Dinwiddie in 1753.)

*December 12.* — I prepared early to wait upon the commander, and was received and conducted to him by the second officer in command. I acquainted him with my business, and offered my commission and letter; both of which he desired me to keep until the arrival of Monsieur Reparti, captain at the next fort, who was sent for and expected every hour.

This commander is a knight of the military order of St. Louis, and named Legardeur de St. Pierre. He is an elderly gentleman, and has much the air of a soldier. He was sent over to take the command immediately upon the death of the late general, and arrived here about seven days before me.

At two o'clock, the gentleman who was sent for arrived, when I offered the letter, etc. again, which they received, and adjourned into a private apartment for the captain to translate, who understood a little English. After he had done it, the commander desired I would walk in and bring my interpreter to peruse and correct it; which I did.

*December 13.* — The chief officers retired to hold a council of war, which gave me an opportunity of taking the dimensions of the fort, and making what observations I could.

It is situated on the south or west fork of French Creek, near the water; and is almost surrounded by the creek, and a small branch of it, which form a kind of island. Four houses compose the sides. The bastions are made of

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piles driven into the ground, standing more than twelve feet above it, and sharp at top, with port-holes cut for cannon, and loop-holes for the small arms to fire through. There are eight six-pounds pieces mounted in each bastion, and one piece of four pounds before the gate. In the bastions are a guard-house, chapel, doctor's lodging, and the commander's private store; round which are laid platforms for the cannon and men to stand on. There are several barracks without the fort, for the soldiers' dwellings, covered, some with bark, and some with boards, made chiefly of logs. There are also several other houses, such as stables, smith's shop, etc.

I could get no certain account of the number of men here; but, according to the best judgment I could form, there are a hundred, exclusive of officers, of whom there are many. I also gave orders to the people who were with me, to take an exact account of the canoes, which were hauled up to convey their forces down in the spring. This they did, and told fifty of the birch bark, and a hundred and seventy of pine; besides many others, which were blocked out, in readiness for being made.

*December 14.* — As the snow increased very fast, and our horses daily became weaker, I sent them off unloaded, under the care of Barnaby Currin and two others, to make all convenient dispatch to Venango,<sup>1</sup> and there to wait our arrival, if there was a prospect of the river's freezing; if not, then to continue down to Shannopin's Town, at the Fork of the Ohio, and there to wait until we came to cross the Allegany; intending myself to go down by water, as I had the offer of a canoe or two.

As I found many plots concerted to retard the Indians' business, and prevent their returning with me, I endeavored all that lay in my power to frustrate their schemes, and hurried them on to execute their intended design. They accordingly pressed for admittance this evening,

<sup>1</sup> Now Franklin, in Venango County, Pennsylvania.

## *George Washington*

which at length was granted them, privately, to the commander and one or two other officers. The Half-King<sup>1</sup> told me, that he offered the wampum to the commander, who evaded taking it, and made many fair promises of love and friendship; said he wanted to live in peace and trade amicable with them, as a proof of which he would send some goods immediately down to the Logstown<sup>2</sup> for them. But I rather think the design of that is to bring away all our straggling traders they meet with, as I privately understood they intended to carry an officer with them. And what rather confirms this opinion, I was inquiring of the commander by what authority he had made prisoners of several of our English subjects. He told me that the country belonged to them; that no Englishman had a right to trade upon those waters; and that he had orders to make every person prisoner, who attempted it on the Ohio, or the waters of it.

I inquired of Captain Reparti about the boy that was carried by this place, as it was done while the command devolved on him, between the death of the late general and the arrival of the present. He acknowledged that a boy had been carried past, and that the Indians had two or three white men's scalps (I was told by some of the Indians at Venango, eight), but pretended to have forgotten the name of the place where the boy came from, and all the particular facts, though he had questioned him for some hours, as they were carrying him past. I likewise inquired what they had done with John Trotter and James McClocklan, two Pennsylvania traders, whom they had taken with all their goods. They told me, that they had been sent to Canada, but were now returned home.

This evening I received an answer to his Honor the Governor's letter from the commandant.

<sup>1</sup> The Half-King was an Indian chief, who with other Indians had joined Washington after he had entered the woods.

<sup>2</sup> On the Ohio River, about seventeen miles from Pittsburg.

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*December 15.* — The commandant ordered a plentiful store of liquor and provision to be put on board our canoes, and appeared to be extremely complaisant, though he was exerting every artifice which he could invent to set our Indians at variance with us, to prevent their going until after our departure; presents, rewards, and everything, which could be suggested by him or his officers. I cannot say that ever in my life I suffered so much anxiety as I did in this affair. I saw that every stratagem which the most fruitful brain could invent was practised to win the Half-King to their interest, and that leaving him there was giving them the opportunity they aimed at. I went to the Half-King and pressed him in the strongest terms to go; he told me that the commandant would not discharge him until the morning. I then went to the commandant and desired him to do their business, and complained of ill treatment; for keeping them, as they were part of my company, was detaining me. This he promised not to do, but to forward my journey as much as he could. He protested he did not keep them, but was ignorant of the cause of their stay; though I soon found it out. He had promised them a present of guns, if they would wait until the morning. As I was very much pressed by the Indians to wait this day for them, I consented, on a promise that nothing should hinder them in the morning.

*December 16.* — The French were not slack in their inventions to keep the Indians this day also. But as they were obliged, according to promise, to give the present, they then endeavored to try the power of liquor, which I doubt not would have prevailed at any other time than this; but I urged and insisted with the King so closely upon his word, that he refrained, and set off with us as he had engaged.

We had a tedious and very fatiguing passage down the creek. Several times we had like to have been staved against rocks; and many times were obliged all hands to

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get out and remain in the water half an hour or more, getting over the shoals. At one place, the ice had lodged, and made it impassable by water; we were, therefore, obliged to carry our canoe across the neck of land, a quarter of a mile over. We did not reach Venango until the 22d, where we met with our horses.

This creek is extremely crooked. I dare say the distance between the fort and Venango cannot be less than one hundred and thirty miles, to follow the meanders.

*December 23.* — When I got things ready to set off, I sent for the Half-King, to know whether he intended to go with us or by water. He told me that White Thunder had hurt himself much, and was sick and unable to walk; therefore he was obliged to carry him down in a canoe. As I found he intended to stay here a day or two, and knew that Monsieur Joncaire would employ every scheme to set him against the English, as he had before done, I told him, I hoped he would guard against his flattery, and let no fine speeches influence him in their favor. He desired I might not be concerned, for he knew the French too well for any thing to engage him in their favor; and that though he could not go down with us, he yet would endeavor to meet at the Fork with Joseph Campbell, to deliver a speech for me to carry to his Honor the Governor. He told me he would order the Young Hunter to attend us, and get provisions, etc. if wanted.

Our horses were now so weak and feeble, and the baggage so heavy (as we were obliged to provide all the necessities which the journey would require), that we doubted much their performing it. Therefore, myself and others, except the drivers, who were obliged to ride, gave up our horses for packs, to assist along with the baggage. I put myself in an Indian walking-dress, and continued with them three days, until I found there was no probability of their getting home in any reasonable time. The horses became less able to travel every day; the cold increased

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very fast; and the roads were becoming much worse by a deep snow, continually freezing; therefore, as I was uneasy to get back, to make report of my proceedings to his Honor the Governor, I determined to prosecute my journey, the nearest way through the woods, on foot.

Accordingly, I left Mr. Van Braam in charge of our baggage, with money and directions to provide necessities from place to place for themselves and horses, and to make the most convenient dispatch in travelling.

I took my necessary papers, pulled off my clothes, and tied myself up in a watch-coat. Then, with gun in hand, and pack on my back, in which were my papers and provisions, I set out with Mr. Gist, fitted in the same manner, on Wednesday the 26th. The day following, just after we had passed a place called Murdering Town (where we intended to quit the path and steer across the country for Shannopin's Town), we fell in with a party of French Indians, who had lain in wait for us. One of them fired at Mr. Gist or me, not fifteen steps off, but fortunately missed. We took this fellow into custody, and kept him until about nine o'clock at night, then let him go, and walked all the remaining part of the night without making any stop, that we might get the start so far as to be out of the reach of their pursuit the next day, since we were well assured they would follow our track as soon as it was light. The next day we continued travelling until quite dark, and got to the river about two miles above Shannopin's. We expected to have found the river frozen, but it was not, only about fifty yards from each shore. The ice, I suppose, had broken up above, for it was driving in vast quantities.

There was no way for getting over but on a raft, which we set about, with but one poor hatchet, and finished just after sun-setting. This was a whole day's work; we next got it launched, then went on board of it, and set off; but before we were half-way over we were jammed in the ice,

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in such a manner that we expected every moment our raft to sink, and ourselves to perish. I put out my setting-pole to try to stop the raft, that the ice might pass by, when the rapidity of the stream threw it with so much violence against the pole that it jerked me out into ten feet water; but I fortunately saved myself by catching hold of one of the raft-logs. Notwithstanding all our efforts, we could not get to either shore, but were obliged, as we were near an island, to quit our raft and make to it.

The cold was so extremely severe, that Mr. Gist had all his fingers and some of his toes frozen, and the water was shut up so hard, that we found no difficulty in getting off the island on the ice in the morning, and went to Mr. Frazier's. We met here with twenty warriors, who were going to the southward to war; but coming to a place on the head of the Great Kenhawa, where they found seven people killed and scalped (all but one woman with very light hair), they turned about and ran back, for fear the inhabitants should rise and take them as the authors of the murder. They report that the bodies were lying about the house, and some of them much torn and eaten by the hogs. By the marks which were left, they say they were French Indians of the Ottawa nation, who did it.

As we intended to take horses here, and it required some time to find them, I went up about three miles to the mouth of Youghiogany, to visit Queen Aliquippa, who had expressed great concern that we passed her in going to the fort. I made her a present of a watch-coat and a bottle of rum, which latter was thought much the better present of the two.

Tuesday, the 1st of January, we left Mr. Frazier's house, and arrived at Mr. Gist's, at Monongahela, the 2d, where I bought a horse and saddle. The 6th, we met seventeen horses loaded with materials and stores for a fort at the Fork of the Ohio, and the day after, some families going out to settle. This day, we arrived at Wills Creek,

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after as fatiguing a journey as it is possible to conceive, rendered so by excessive bad weather. From the 1st day of December to the 15th there was but one day on which it did not rain or snow incessantly; and throughout the whole journey we met with nothing but one continued series of cold, wet weather, which occasioned very uncomfortable lodgings, especially after we had quitted our tent, which was some screen from the inclemency of it. On the 11th, I got to Belvoir, where I stopped one day to take necessary rest; and then set out and arrived in Williamsburg the 16th, where I waited upon his Honor the Governor, with the letter I had brought from the French commandant, and to give an account of the success of my proceedings. This I beg leave to do by offering the foregoing narrative, as it contains the most remarkable occurrences which happened in my journey.

I hope what has been said will be sufficient to make your Honor satisfied with my conduct; for that was my aim in undertaking the journey, and chief study throughout the prosecution of it.



## *Letters*

I. To Robert Orme, Gen. Braddock's aide-de-camp, upon Washington's appointment to join Gen. Braddock's expedition.

MOUNT VERNON, 15 *March*, 1755.

SIR:

I was not favored with your polite letter, of the 2d instant, until yesterday; acquainting me with the notice his Excellency, General Braddock, is pleased to honor me with, by kindly inviting me to become one of his family the ensuing campaign. It is true, sir, I have, ever since I declined my late command, expressed an inclination to serve in this campaign as a volunteer; and this inclination is not a little increased, since it is likely to be conducted by a gentleman of the general's experience.

But, besides this, and the laudable desire I may have to serve with my best abilities my king and country, I must be ingenuous enough to confess, that I am not a little biased by selfish considerations. To explain, sir, I wish earnestly to attain some knowledge in the military profession, and, believing a more favorable opportunity cannot offer than to serve under a gentleman of General Braddock's abilities and experience, it does, you may reasonably suppose, not a little contribute to influence my choice. But, sir, as I have taken the liberty to express my sentiments so freely, I must beg your indulgence while I add, that the only bar which can check me in the pursuit of this object, is the inconveniences that must necessarily result from some proceedings, which happened a little before the general's arrival, and which, in some measure, had abated the ardor of my desires, and determined me to lead a life of retirement, into which I was just entering, at no small expense, when your favor was presented to me.

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But, as I shall do myself the honor of waiting upon his Excellency as soon as I hear of his arrival at Alexandria, (I would do it sooner, were I certain where to find him,) I shall decline saying anything further on this head till then, begging you will be pleased to assure him, that I shall always retain a grateful sense of the favor with which he is pleased to honor me, and that I should have embraced this opportunity of writing to him, had I not recently addressed a congratulatory letter to him on his safe arrival in this country.

I flatter myself you will favor me in making a communication of these sentiments.

You do me a singular favor in proposing an acquaintance. It cannot but be attended with the most flattering prospects on my part, as you may already perceive by the familiarity and freedom with which I now enter upon this correspondence; a freedom which, even if it is disagreeable, you must excuse, and lay the blame of it at your own door, for encouraging me to throw off that restraint which otherwise might have been more obvious in my deportment on such an occasion.

The hope of shortly seeing you will be an excuse for my not adding more than that I shall endeavor to approve myself worthy of your friendship, and that I beg to be esteemed your most obedient servant.

### II. To William Fairfax.

WINCHESTER, 5 May, 1755.

DEAR SIR:

I overtook the general at Frederic Town, in Maryland. Thence we proceeded to this place, where we shall remain till the arrival of the second division of the train, which we hear left Alexandria on Tuesday last. After that, we shall continue our march to Wills Creek; from whence, it is imagined, we shall not stir till the latter end of this

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month, for want of wagons and other conveniences of transport over the mountains.

You will naturally conclude, that to pass through Maryland, when no object required it, was an uncommon and an extraordinary route for the general and for Colonel Dunbar's regiment to this place. The reason, however, was obvious. Those who promoted it had rather the communication should be opened that way than through Virginia; but I believe the eyes of the general are now opened, and the imposition detected; consequently, the like will not happen again. I am, etc.

III. To John A. Washington.

PORT CUMBERLAND, 14 May, 1755.

DEAR BROTHER:

As wearing boots is quite the mode, and mine are in a declining state, I must beg the favor of you to procure me a pair that are good and neat, and send them to Major Carlyle, who, I hope, will contrive to forward them as quickly as my necessity requires.

I see no prospect of moving from this place soon, as we have neither horses nor wagons enough, and no forage, except what is expected from Philadelphia; therefore, I am well convinced that the trouble and difficulty we must encounter in passing the mountains, for the want of proper conveniences, will equal all the difficulties of the campaign; for I conceive the march of such a train of artillery, in these roads, to be a tremendous undertaking. As to any danger from the enemy, I look upon it as trifling, for I believe the French will be obliged to exert their utmost force to repel the attacks to the northward, where Governor Shirley and others, with a body of eight thousand men, will annoy their settlements, and attempt their forts.

The general has appointed me one of his aides-de-camp, in which character I shall serve this campaign agreeably

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enough, as I am thereby freed from all commands but his, and give his orders, which must be implicitly obeyed.

I have now a good opportunity, and shall not neglect it, of forming an acquaintance, which may be serviceable hereafter, if I find it worth while to push my fortune in the military line.

I have written to my two female correspondents by this opportunity, one of whose letters I have enclosed to you, and beg your deliverance of it. I shall expect a particular account of all that has happened since my departure.

I am, dear Jack,

Your most affectionate brother.

### IV. To John A. Washington.

Youghiogany, 28 June, 1755.

DEAR BROTHER:

Immediately upon our leaving the camp at George's Creek, on the 14th instant, from whence I wrote to you, I was seized with a violent fever and pain of the head, which continued without intermission until the 23d, when I was relieved, by the general's absolutely ordering the physician to give me Dr. James's powders, one of the most excellent medicines in the world. It gave me immediate ease, and removed my fever and other complaints in four days' time. My illness was too violent to suffer me to ride; therefore I was indebted to a covered wagon for some part of my transportation; but even in this I could not continue far. The jolting was so great, that I was left upon the road, with a guard and some necessaries, to wait the arrival of Colonel Dunbar's detachment, which was two days' march behind us, the general giving me his word of honor that I should be brought up before he reached the French fort. This promise, and the doctor's declaration, that if I persevered in my attempts to go on, in the con-

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dition I then was, my life would be endangered, determined me to halt for the above mentioned detachment.

As the communication between this and Wills Creek must soon be too dangerous for single persons to pass, it will render the intercourse of letters slow and precarious; therefore I shall attempt (and will go through it if I have strength) to give you an account of our proceedings, our situation, and prospects at present; which I desire you will communicate to Colonel Fairfax, and others, my correspondents, for I am too weak to write more than this letter.

In the letter which I wrote to you from George's Creek, I acquainted you that, unless the number of wagons was retrenched and the carriage-horses increased, we should never be able to see Fort Duquesne. This, in two days afterwards (which was about the time they got to the Little Meadows, with some of their foremost wagons and strongest teams), they themselves were convinced of; for they found that, besides the extreme difficulty of getting the wagons along at all, they had often a line of three or four miles in length; and the soldiers guarding them were so dispersed, that, if we had been attacked either in front, centre, or rear, the part so attacked must have been cut off or totally routed, before they could be sustained by any other corps.

At the Little Meadows a second council was called (for there had been one before), wherein the urgency for horses was again represented to the officers of the different corps, and how laudable a farther retrenchment of their baggage would be, that the spare ones might be turned over for the public service. In order to encourage this, I gave up my best horse, which I have never heard of since, and took no more baggage than half my portmanteau would easily contain. It is said, however, that the number reduced by this second attempt was only from two hundred and ten or twelve, to two hundred, which had no perceivable effect.

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The general, before they met in council, asked my private opinion concerning the expedition. I urged him, in the warmest terms I was able, to push forward, if he even did it with a small but chosen band, with such artillery and light stores as were necessary; leaving the heavy artillery, baggage, and the like with the rear division of the army, to follow by slow and easy marches, which they might do safely while we were advanced in front. As one reason to support this opinion, I urged that, if we could credit our intelligence, the French were weak at the Fork at present, but hourly expected reinforcements, which, to my certain knowledge, could not arrive with provisions, or any supplies, during the continuance of the drought, as the Buffalo River (*Rivière aux Bœufs*), down which was their only communication to Venango, must be as dry as we now found the Great Crossing of the Youghiogany, which may be passed dry-shod.

This advice prevailed, and it was determined that the general, with one thousand two hundred chosen men, and officers from all the different corps, under the following field officers, viz., Sir Peter Halket, who acts as brigadier, Lieutenant-Colonel Gage, Lieutenant-Colonel Burton, and Major Sparks, with such a number of wagons as the train would absolutely require, should march as soon as things could be got in readiness. This was completed, and we were on our march by the 19th, leaving Colonel Dunbar and Major Chapman behind, with the residue of the two regiments, some independent companies, most of the women, and, in short, everything not absolutely essential, carrying our provisions and other necessities upon horses.

We set out with less than thirty carriages, including those that transported the ammunition for the howitzers, twelve-pounders, and six-pounders, and all of them strongly horsed; which was a prospect that conveyed infinite delight to my mind, though I was excessively ill at the time. But this prospect was soon clouded, and my hopes brought

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very low indeed, when I found that, instead of pushing on with vigor, without regarding a little rough road, they were halting to level every mole-hill, and to erect bridges over every brook, by which means we were four days in getting twelve miles.

At this camp I was left by the doctor's advice and the general's positive orders, as I have already mentioned, without which I should not have been prevailed upon to remain behind; as I then imagined, and now believe, I shall find it no easy matter to join my own corps again, which is twenty-five miles in advance. Notwithstanding, I had the general's word of honor, pledged in the most solemn manner, that I should be brought up before he arrived at Fort Duquesne. They have had frequent alarms, and several men have been scalped; but this is done with no other design than to retard the march, and to harass the men, who, if they are to be turned out every time a small party attacks the guards at night (for I am certain they have not sufficient force to make a serious assault), the enemy's aim will be accomplished by the gaining of time.

I have been now six days with Colonel Dunbar's corps, who are in a miserable condition for want of horses, not having enough for their wagons; so that the only method he has of proceeding is to march with as many wagons as these will draw, and then halt till the remainder are brought up with the same horses, which requires two days more; and shortly, I believe, he will not be able to stir at all. There has been vile management in regard to horses.

My strength will not admit of my saying more, though I have not said half that I intended concerning affairs here. Business I shall not think of, but depend solely upon your management of all my affairs, not doubting that they will be well conducted. I am, etc.

# Letters

V. To Mrs. Mary Washington, Near Fredericksburg.

PORT CUMBERLAND, 18 July, 1755.

HONORED MADAM:

As I doubt not but you have heard of our defeat, and, perhaps, had it represented in a worse light, if possible, than it deserves, I have taken this earliest opportunity to give you some account of the engagement as it happened within ten miles of the French fort, on Wednesday the 9th instant.

We marched to that place without any considerable loss having only now and then a straggler picked up by the French and scouting Indians. When we came there we were attacked by a party of French and Indians, whose number, I am persuaded, did not exceed three hundred men; while ours consisted of about one thousand three hundred well-armed troops, chiefly regular soldiers, who were struck with such a panic that they behaved with more cowardice than it is possible to conceive. The officers behaved gallantly in order to encourage their men, for which they suffered greatly, there being near sixty killed and wounded; a large proportion of the number we had.

The Virginia troops showed a good deal of bravery, and were nearly all killed; for I believe, out of three companies that there were scarcely thirty men left alive. Captain Peyrouny, and all his officers down to a corporal, were killed. Captain Polson had nearly as hard a fate, for only one of his was left. In short, the dastardly behavior of those they call regulars exposed all others, that were inclined to do their duty, to almost certain death; and at last, despite of all the efforts of the officers to the contrary, they ran, as sheep pursued by dogs, and it was impossible to rally them.

The general was wounded, of which he died three days after. Sir Peter Halket was killed in the field, where died many other brave officers. I luckily escaped without a



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wound, though I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me. Captains Orme and Morris, two of the aides-de-camp, were wounded early in the engagement, which rendered the duty harder upon me, as I was the only person then left to distribute the general's orders, which I was scarcely able to do, as I was not half recovered from a violent illness that had confined me to my bed and a wagon for above ten days. I am still in a weak and feeble condition, which induces me to halt here two or three days in the hope of recovering a little strength, to enable me to proceed homewards; from whence, I fear, I shall not be able to stir till towards September; so that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you till then, unless it be in Fairfax. Please to give my love to Mr. Lewis and my sister; and compliments to Mr. Jackson, and all other friends that inquire after me. I am, honored madam, your most dutiful son.

VI. To Bryan Fairfax, on the Stamp Act.

MOUNT VERNON, 20 July, 1774.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 17th was not presented to me till after the resolutions, which were judged advisable for this country to adopt, had been revised, altered, and corrected in the committee; nor till we had gone into a general meeting in the court-house, and my attention was necessarily called every moment to the business before us. I did, however, upon the receipt of it, in that hurry and bustle, hastily run it over, and I handed it round to the gentlemen on the bench, of whom there were many; but, as no person present seemed in the least disposed to adopt your sentiments, as there appeared a perfect satisfaction and acquiescence in the measures proposed (except from Mr. Williamson, who was for adopting your advice literally, without obtaining a second voice on his

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side), and as a gentleman, to whom the letter was shown, advised me not to have it read, as it was not likely to make a convert, and was repugnant, some of them thought, to every principle we were contending for, I forbore to offer it otherwise than in the manner above mentioned; which I shall be sorry for, if it gives you any dissatisfaction that your sentiments were not read to the county at large, instead of being communicated to the first people in it, by offering them the letter in the manner I did.

That I differ very widely from you, in respect to the mode of obtaining a repeal of the acts so much and so justly complained of, I shall not hesitate to acknowledge; and that this difference in opinion probably proceeds from the different constructions we put upon the conduct and intention of the ministry may also be true; but as I see nothing, on the one hand, to induce a belief that the Parliament would embrace a favorable opportunity of repealing acts which they go on with great rapidity to pass in order to enforce their tyrannical system; and, on the other, I observe, or think I observe, that government is pursuing a regular plan at the expense of law and justice to overthrow our constitutional rights and liberties, how can I expect any redress from a measure which has been ineffectually tried already? For, sir, what is it we are contending against? Is it against paying the duty of three pence per pound on tea because burdensome? No; it is the right only, that we have all long disputed; and to this end we have already petitioned his Majesty in as humble and dutiful a manner as subjects could do. Nay, more, we applied to the House of Lords and House of Commons in their different legislative capacities, setting forth, that, as Englishmen, we could not be deprived of this essential and valuable part of our constitution. If, then, as the fact really is, it is against the right of taxation that we now do, and, as I before said, all along have contended, why should they suppose an exertion of

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this power would be less obnoxious now than formerly? And what reason have we to believe that they would make a second attempt, whilst the same sentiments fill the breast of every American, if they did not intend to enforce it if possible?

The conduct of the Boston people could not justify the rigor of their measures, unless there had been a requisition of payment and refusal of it; nor did that conduct require an act to deprive the government of Massachusetts Bay of their charter, or to exempt offenders from trial in the places where offences were committed, as there was not, nor could there be, a single instance produced to manifest the necessity of it. Are not all these things evident proofs of a fixed and uniform plan to tax us? If we want further proofs, do not all the debates in the House of Commons serve to confirm this? And has not General Gage's conduct since his arrival, in stopping the address of his council and publishing a proclamation more becoming a Turkish bashaw than an English governor, declaring it treason to associate in any manner by which the commerce of Great Britain is to be affected, — has not this exhibited an unexampled testimony of the most despotic system of tyranny that ever was practised in a free government? In short, what further proofs are wanting to satisfy any one of the designs of the ministry than their own acts, which are uniform and plainly tending to the same point, nay, if I mistake not, avowedly to fix the right of taxation? What hope have we then from petitioning, when they tell us that now or never is the time to fix the matter? Shall we, after this, whine and cry for relief, when we have already tried it in vain? Or shall we supinely sit and see one province after another fall a sacrifice to despotism?

If I were in any doubt as to the right which the Parliament of Great Britain had to tax us without our consent, I should most heartily coincide with you in opinion, that

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to petition, and petition only, is the proper method to apply for relief; because we should then be asking a favor, and not claiming a right, which, by the law of nature and by our constitution, we are, in my opinion, indubitably entitled to. I should even think it criminal to go further than this, under such an idea; but I have none such. I think the Parliament of Great Britain have no more right to put their hands into my pocket, without my consent, than I have to put my hands into yours; and this being already urged to them in a firm but decent manner, by all the colonies, what reason is there to expect anything from their justice?

As to the resolution for addressing the throne, I own to you, sir, I think the whole might as well have been expunged. I expect nothing from the measure, nor should my voice have sanctioned it, if the non-importation scheme was intended to be retarded by it; for I am convinced, as much as I am of my existence, that there is no relief for us but in their distress; and I think, at least I hope, that there is public virtue enough left among us to deny ourselves everything but the bare necessities of life to accomplish this end. This we have a right to do, and no power upon earth can compel us to do otherwise, till it has first reduced us to the most abject state of slavery. The stopping of our exports would, no doubt, be a shorter method than the other to effect this purpose; but if we owe money to Great Britain, nothing but the last necessity can justify the non-payment of it; and, therefore, I have great doubts upon this head, and wish to see the other method first tried, which is legal and will facilitate these payments.

I cannot conclude without expressing some concern that I should differ so widely in sentiments from you on a matter of such great moment and general import; and I should much distrust my own judgment upon the occasion, if my nature did not recoil at the thought of sub-

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mitting to measures which I think subversive of everything that I ought to hold dear and valuable, and did I not find, at the same time, that the voice of mankind is with me. I must apologize for sending you so rough a sketch of my thoughts upon your letter. When I look back and see the length of my own, I cannot, as I am a good deal hurried at this time, think of taking off a fair copy.

I am, dear sir, your most obedient humble servant.

VII. To the President of Congress upon his appointment as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me, in this appointment, yet I feel great distress, from a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust. However, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service, and for the support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.

But, lest some unlucky event should happen, unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I, this day, declare with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with.

As to pay, sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress, that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those, I doubt not, they will discharge; and that is all I desire.

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VIII. To Mrs. Martha Washington upon the same occasion.

MY DEAREST:

I am now set down to write to you on a subject which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated and increased when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Congress, that the whole army raised for the defence of the American cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it.

You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. But as it has been a kind of destiny that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. You might, and I suppose did perceive, from the tenor of my letters, that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return. That was the case. It was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment without exposing my character to such censures as would have reflected dishonor upon myself, and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, could not, and ought not, to be pleasing to you, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem. I shall rely, therefore, confidently on that Providence which has heretofore preserved and been bountiful to me, not doubting but that I shall return safe to you in the fall. I shall feel no pain from the toil or

## *George Washington*

the danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone. I therefore beg that you will summon your whole fortitude, and pass your time as agreeably as possible. Nothing will give me so much sincere satisfaction as to hear this, and to hear it from your own pen. My earnest and ardent desire is, that you would pursue any plan that is most likely to produce content and a tolerable degree of tranquillity; as it must add greatly to my uneasy feelings to hear that you are dissatisfied or complaining at what I really could not avoid.

As life is always uncertain, and common prudence dictates to every man the necessity of settling his temporal concerns while it is in his power, and while the mind is calm and undisturbed, I have, since I came to this place (for I had not time to do it before I left home), got Colonel Pendleton to draft a will for me, by the directions I gave him, which I will now enclose. The provision made for you in case of my death, will, I hope, be agreeable.

I shall add nothing more, as I have several letters to write, but to desire that you will remember me to your friends, and to assure you that I am, with the most unfeigned regard, my dear Patsy, your affectionate, &c.

IX. To Lund Washington, entrusting him with the care of Mount Vernon during this absence.

I well know where the difficulty of accomplishing these things will lie. Overseers are already engaged, upon shares, to look after my business. Remote advantages to me, however manifest and beneficial, are nothing to them; and to engage standing wages, when I do not know that anything that I have or can raise will command cash, is attended with hazard; for which reason I hardly know what more to say than to discover to you

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my wishes. The same reason, although it may in appearance have the same tendency in respect to you, shall not be the same in its operation; for I will engage for the year coming, and the year following, if these troubles and my absence continue, that your wages shall be standing and certain, at the highest amount, that any one year's crop has produced to you yet. I do not offer this as any temptation to induce you to go on more cheerfully in prosecuting these schemes of mine. I should do injustice to you, were I not to acknowledge that your conduct has ever appeared to me above everything sordid; but I offer it in consideration of the great charge you have upon your hands, and my entire dependence upon your fidelity and industry.

It is the greatest, indeed it is the only comfortable reflection I enjoy on this score, that my business is in the hands of a person concerning whose integrity I have not a doubt, and on whose care I can rely. Were it not for this, I should feel very unhappy on account of the situation of my affairs; but I am persuaded you will do for me as you would for yourself, and more than this I cannot expect.

Let the hospitality of the house with respect to the poor be kept up. Let no one go hungry away. If any of this kind of people should be in want of corn, supply their necessities, provided it does not encourage them in idleness; and I have no objection to your giving my money in charity, to the amount of forty or fifty pounds a year, when you think it well bestowed. What I mean by having no objection is, that it is my desire that it should be done. You are to consider, that neither myself nor wife is now in the way to do these good offices. In all other respects I recommend it to you, and have no doubt of your observing the greatest economy and frugality; as I suppose you know that I do not get a farthing for my services here, more than my expenses.



## *George Washington*

It becomes necessary, therefore, for me to be saving at home.

X. To the President of Congress from Camp at Cambridge.

10 July, 1775.

SIR:

I arrived safe at this place on the 3d instant, after a journey attended with a good deal of fatigue, and retarded by necessary attentions to the successive civilities, which accompanied me in my whole route.

Upon my arrival, I immediately visited the several posts occupied by our troops; and, as soon as the weather permitted, reconnoitred those of the enemy. I found the latter strongly intrenching on Bunker's Hill, about a mile from Charlestown, and advanced about a mile from the place of the late action, with their sentries extended about one hundred and fifty yards on this side of the narrowest part of the neck leading from this place to Charlestown. Three floating batteries lie in Mystic River near their camp, and one twenty-gun ship below the ferry-place between Boston and Charlestown. They have also a battery on Cops Hill, on the Boston side, which much annoyed our troops in the late attack. Upon Roxbury Neck, they are also deeply intrenched and strongly fortified. Their advanced guards, till last Saturday, occupied Brown's houses, about a mile from Roxbury meeting-house, and twenty rods from their lines; but at that time a party from General Thomas's camp surprised the guard, drove them in, and burned the houses. The bulk of their army, commanded by General Howe, lies on Bunker's Hill, and the remainder on Roxbury Neck, except the light-horse and a few men in the town of Boston.

On our side, we have thrown up intrenchments on Winter and Prospect Hills, the enemy's camp in full view, at the distance of little more than a mile. Such interme-

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diate points as would admit a landing, I have since my arrival taken care to strengthen, down to Sewall's farm, where a strong intrenchment has been thrown up. At Roxbury, General Thomas has thrown up a strong work on the hill, about two hundred yards above the meeting-house; which, with the brokenness of the ground, and a great number of rocks, has made that pass very secure. The troops raised in New Hampshire, with a regiment from Rhode Island, occupy Winter Hill; a part of those from Connecticut, under General Putnam, are on Prospect Hill. The troops in this town are entirely of the Massachusetts; the remainder of the Rhode Island men are at Sewall's farm. Two regiments of Connecticut, and nine of the Massachusetts, are at Roxbury. The residue of the army, to the number of about seven hundred, are posted in several small towns along the coast, to prevent the depredations of the enemy.

Upon the whole, I think myself authorized to say, that, considering the great extent of line and the nature of the ground, we are as well secured as could be expected in so short a time, and with the disadvantages we labor under. These consist in a want of engineers to construct proper works and direct the men, a want of tools, and a sufficient number of men to man the works in case of an attack. You will observe, by the proceedings of the council of war, which I have the honor to enclose, that it is our unanimous opinion to hold and defend these works as long as possible. The discouragement it would give the men, and its contrary effects on the ministerial troops, thus to abandon our encampment in their face, formed with so much labor and expense, added to the certain destruction of a considerable and valuable extent of country, and our uncertainty of finding a place in all respects so capable of making a stand, are leading reasons for this determination. At the same time we are very sensible of the difficulties which attend the defence of

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lines of so great extent, and the dangers which may ensue from such a division of the army.

My earnest wish to comply with the instructions of the Congress, in making an early and complete return of the state of the army, has led to an involuntary delay of addressing you; which has given me much concern. Having given orders for that purpose immediately on my arrival, and not then so well apprised of the imperfect obedience which had been paid to those of the like nature from General Ward, I was led from day to day to expect they would come in, and therefore detained the messenger. They are not now so complete as I could wish; but much allowance is to be made for inexperience in forms, and a liberty which had been taken (not given) on the subject. These reasons, I flatter myself, will no longer exist; and, of consequence, more regularity and exactness will in future prevail. This, with a necessary attention to the lines, the movements of the ministerial troops, and our immediate security, must be my apology, which I beg you to lay before Congress with the utmost duty and respect.

We labor under great disadvantages for want of tents; for, though they have been helped out by a collection of sails from the seaport towns, the number is far short of our necessities. The colleges and houses of this town are necessarily occupied by the troops; which affords another reason for keeping our present station. But I most sincerely wish the whole army was properly provided to take the field, as I am well assured, that, besides greater expedition and activity in case of alarm, it would highly conduce to health and discipline. As materials are not to be had here, I would beg leave to recommend the procuring of a farther supply from Philadelphia as soon as possible.

I should be extremely deficient in gratitude, as well as justice, if I did not take the first opportunity to ac-

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knowledge the readiness and attention, which the Provincial Congress<sup>1</sup> and different committees have shown, to make everything as convenient and agreeable as possible. But there is a vital and inherent principle of delay incompatible with military service, in transacting business through such numerous and different channels. I esteem it, therefore, my duty to represent the inconvenience which must unavoidably ensue from a dependence on a number of persons for supplies; and submit it to the consideration of Congress, whether the public service will not be best promoted by appointing a commissary-general for these purposes. We have a striking instance of the preference of such a mode, in the establishment of Connecticut, as their troops are extremely well provided under the direction of Mr. Trumbull, and he has at different times assisted others with various articles. Should my sentiments happily coincide with those of your Honors on this subject, I beg leave to propose Mr. Trumbull as a very proper person for this department. In the arrangement of troops collected under such circumstances, and upon the spur of immediate necessity, several appointments have been omitted, which appear to be indispensably necessary for the good government of the army, particularly a quarter-master-general, a commissary of musters, and a commissary of artillery. These I must particularly recommend to the notice and provision of the Congress.

I find myself already much embarrassed for want of a military chest. These embarrassments will increase every day. I must therefore most earnestly request that money may be forwarded as soon as possible. The want of this most necessary article will, I fear, produce great inconveniences, if not prevented by an early attention. I find the army in general, and the troops raised in Massachusetts in particular, very deficient in necessary clothing.

<sup>1</sup>That is, the congress formed by the patriots in Massachusetts.

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Upon inquiry, there appears no probability of obtaining any supplies in this quarter; and, on the best consideration of this matter I am able to form, I am of opinion that a number of hunting-shirts, not less than ten thousand, would in a great degree remove this difficulty, in the cheapest and quickest manner. I know nothing, in a speculative view, more trivial, yet which, if put in practice, would have a happier tendency to unite the men, and abolish those provincial distinctions that lead to jealousy and dissatisfaction.

In a former part of this letter I mentioned the want of engineers. I can hardly express the disappointment I have experienced on this subject, the skill of those we have being very imperfect, and confined to the mere manual exercise of cannon; whereas the war in which we are engaged requires a knowledge, comprehending the duties of the field, and fortification. If any persons thus qualified are to be found in the southern colonies, it would be of great public service to forward them with all expedition.

Upon the article of ammunition I must reëcho the former complaints on this subject. We are so exceedingly destitute, that our artillery will be of little use, without a supply both large and seasonable. What we have must be reserved for the small arms, and that managed with the utmost frugality.

I am very sorry to observe that the appointment of general officers, in the provinces of Massachusetts and Connecticut, has not corresponded with the wishes and judgment of either the civil or military. The great dissatisfaction expressed on this subject, and the apparent danger of throwing the whole army into the utmost disorder, together with the strong representations made by the Provincial Congress, have induced me to retain the commissions in my hands until the pleasure of the Continental Congress should be further known, except Gen-

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eral Putnam's, which was given the day I came to the camp, and before I was apprised of these disgusts. In such a step, I must beg the Congress will do me the justice to believe that I have been actuated solely by a regard to the public good.

I have not, nor could I have, any private attachments; every gentleman in appointment was a stranger to me, but from character; I must, therefore, rely upon the candor and indulgence of Congress for their most favorable construction of my conduct in this particular. General Spencer's disgust was so great at General Putnam's promotion, that he left the army without visiting me, or making known his intention in any respect.

General Pomroy had also retired before my arrival, occasioned, as it is said, by some disappointment from the Provincial Congress. General Thomas is much esteemed, and most earnestly desired to continue in the service; and, as far as my opportunities have enabled me to judge, I must join in the general opinion, that he is an able, good officer; and his resignation would be a public loss. The postponing of him to Pomroy and Heath, whom he has commanded, would make his continuance very difficult, and probably operate on his mind, as the like circumstances did on that of Spencer.

The state of the army you will find ascertained with tolerable precision in the returns which accompany this letter. Upon finding the number of men to fall so far short of the establishment, and below all expectation, immediately called a council of the general officers, whose opinion as to the mode of filling up the regiments, and providing for the present exigency, I have the honor of enclosing, together with the best judgment we are able to form of the ministerial troops. From the number of boys, deserters, and negroes, that have been enlisted in the troops of this province, I entertain some doubts whether the number required can be raised here; and all the gen-

## *George Washington*

eral officers agree that no dependence can be put on the militia for a continuance in camp, or regularity and discipline during the short time they may stay. This unhappy and devoted province has been so long in a state of anarchy, and the yoke of ministerial oppression has been laid so heavily on it, that great allowances are to be made for troops raised under such circumstances. The deficiency of numbers, discipline, and stores, can only lead to this conclusion, that their spirit has exceeded their strength. But, at the same time, I would humbly submit to the consideration of Congress the propriety of making some further provision of men from the other colonies. If these regiments should be completed to their establishment, the dismissal of those unfit for duty, on account of their age and character, would occasion a considerable reduction; and, at all events, they have been enlisted upon such terms that they may be disbanded when other troops arrive. But should my apprehensions be realized, and the regiments here not be filled up, the public cause would suffer by an absolute dependence upon so doubtful an event, unless some provision is made against such a disappointment.

It requires no military skill to judge of the difficulty of introducing proper discipline and subordination into an army, while we have the enemy in view, and are in daily expectation of an attack; but it is of so much importance that every effort will be made to this end which time and circumstances will admit. In the mean time, I have a sincere pleasure in observing, that there are materials for a good army, a great number of able-bodied men, active, zealous in the cause, and of unquestionable courage.

I am now, sir, to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 28th of June, enclosing the resolutions of Congress of the 27th, and a copy of a letter from the Committee of Albany; to all which I shall pay due attention.

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Generals Gates and Sullivan have both arrived in good health.

My best abilities are at all times devoted to the service of my country; but I feel the weight, importance, and variety of my present duties too sensibly, not to wish a more immediate and frequent communication with the Congress. I fear it may often happen, in the course of our present operations, that I shall need that assistance and direction from them, which time and distance will not allow me to receive.

Since writing the above, I have also to acknowledge your favor of the 4th instant by Fessenden, and the receipt of the commissions and articles of war. Among the other returns, I have also sent one of our killed, wounded, and missing, in the late action; but have been able to procure no certain account of the loss of the ministerial troops. My best intelligence fixes it at about five hundred killed and six or seven hundred wounded; but it is no more than conjecture, the utmost pains being taken on their side to conceal their loss.

Having ordered the commanding officer to give me the earliest intelligence of every motion of the enemy by land or water, discernible from the heights of his camp, I this instant, as I was closing my letter, received the enclosed from the brigade-major. The design of this manœuvre I know not; perhaps it may be to make a descent somewhere along the coast; it may be for New York; or it may be practised as a deception on us. I thought it not improper, however, to mention the matter to you; I have done the same to the commanding officer at New York; and I shall let it be known to the Committee of Safety here, so that intelligence may be communicated, as they shall think best, along the sea-coast of this government.

I have the honor to be, etc.



# George Washington

XI. To the President of Congress from Camp at Valley Forge.

VALLEY FORGE, 23 December, 1777.

SIR:

Full as I was in my representation of the matters in the commissary's department yesterday, fresh and more powerful reasons oblige me to add, that I am now convinced beyond a doubt, that, unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place in that line, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things: starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can. Rest assured, sir, this is not an exaggerated picture, and that I have abundant reason to suppose what I say.

Yesterday afternoon, receiving information that the enemy in force had left the city, and were advancing towards Derby with the apparent design to forage and draw subsistence from that part of the country, I ordered the troops to be in readiness, that I might give every opposition in my power; when behold, to my great mortification, I was not only informed but convinced, that the men were unable to stir on account of provision, and that a dangerous mutiny, begun the night before, and which with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some officers, was still much to be apprehended for want of this article. This brought forth the only commissary in the purchasing line in this camp; and, with him, this melancholy and alarming truth, that he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than twenty-five barrels of flour! From hence form an opinion of our situation when I add that he could not tell when to expect any.

All I could do, under these circumstances, was to send out a few light parties to watch and harass the enemy, whilst other parties were instantly detached different ways to collect, if possible, as much provision as would satisfy

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the present pressing wants of the soldiery. But will this answer? No, sir; three or four days of bad weather would prove our destruction. What, then, is to become of the army this winter? And if we are so often without provisions now, what is to become of us in the spring, when our force will be collected, with the aid perhaps of militia to take advantage of an early campaign, before the enemy can be reinforced? These are considerations of great magnitude, meriting the closest attention; and they will, when my own reputation is so intimately connected with the event as to be affected by it, justify my saying, that the present commissaries are by no means equal to the execution of the office, or that the disaffection of the people is past all belief. The misfortune, however, does in my opinion proceed from both causes; and though I have been tender heretofore of giving my opinion, or lodging complaints, as the change in that department took place contrary to my judgment, and the consequences thereof were predicted; yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar but by those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth, then, I can declare, that no man in my opinion ever had his measures more impeded than I have, by every department of the army.

Since the month of July we have had no assistance from the quartermaster-general, and to want of assistance from this department the commissary-general charges great part of his deficiency. To this I am to add, that, notwithstanding it is a standing order, and often repeated, that the troops shall always have two days' provisions by them, that they might be ready at any sudden call; yet an opportunity has scarcely ever offered, of taking advantage of the enemy, that has not been either totally obstructed, or greatly impeded on this account. And this, the great and crying evil, is not all. The soap, vinegar, and other

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articles allowed by Congress, we see none of, nor have we seen them, I believe, since the Battle of Brandywine. The first, indeed, we have now little occasion for; few men having more than one shirt, many only the moiety of one, and some none at all. In addition to which, as a proof of the little benefit received from a clothier-general, and as a further proof of the inability of an army, under the circumstances of this, to perform the common duties of soldiers, (besides a number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers' houses on the same account,) we have, by a field return this day made, no less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot and otherwise naked. By the same return it appears that our whole strength in Continental troops, including the eastern brigades, which have joined us since the surrender of General Burgoyne, exclusive of the Maryland troops sent to Wilmington, amounts to no more than eight thousand two hundred in camp fit for duty; notwithstanding which, and that since the 4th instant, our numbers fit for duty, from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly on account of blankets (numbers having been obliged, and still are, to sit up all night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest in a natural and common way), have decreased near two thousand men.

We find gentlemen, without knowing whether the army was really going into winter-quarters or not (for I am sure no resolution of mine would warrant the remonstrance), reprobating the measure as much as if they thought the soldiers were made of stocks or stones, and equally insensible of frost and snow; and moreover, as if they conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages I have described ours to be, which are by no means exaggerated, to confine a superior one, in all respects well appointed and provided for a winter's campaign, within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from

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depredation and waste the States of Pennsylvania and Jersey. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is that these very gentlemen — who were well apprised of the nakedness of the troops from ocular demonstration, who thought their own soldiers worse clad than others, and who advised me near a month ago to postpone the execution of a plan I was about to adopt, in consequence of a resolve of Congress for seizing clothes, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be collected in ten days agreeably to a decree of the State (not one article of which, by the by, is yet come to hand) — should think a winter's campaign, and the covering of these States from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and from my soul I pity those miseries, which it is neither in my power to relieve nor prevent.

It is for these reasons, therefore, that I have dwelt upon the subject; and it adds not a little to my other difficulties and distress to find that much more is expected of me than is possible to be performed, and that upon the ground of safety and policy I am obliged to conceal the true state of the army from public view, and thereby expose myself to detraction and calumny. The honorable committee of Congress went from camp fully possessed of my sentiments respecting the establishment of this army, the necessity of auditors of accounts, the appointment of officers, and new arrangements. I have no need, therefore, to be prolix upon these subjects, but I refer to the committee. I shall add a word or two to show, first the necessity of some better provision for binding the officers by the tie

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of interest to the service, as no day nor scarce an hour passes without the offer of a resigned commission; (otherwise I much doubt the practicability of holding the army together much longer, and in this I shall probably be thought the more sincere, when I freely declare that I do not myself expect to derive the smallest benefit from any establishment that Congress may adopt, otherwise than as a member of the community at large in the good, which I am persuaded will result from the measure, by making better officers and better troops;) and, secondly, to point out the necessity of making the appointments and arrangements without loss of time. We have not more than three months in which to prepare a great deal of business. If we let these slip or waste, we shall be laboring under the same difficulties all next campaign, as we have been this, to rectify mistakes and bring things to order.

Military arrangement, and movements in consequence, like the mechanism of a clock, will be imperfect and disordered by the want of a part. In a very sensible degree have I experienced this, in the course of the last summer, several brigades having no brigadiers appointed to them till late, and some not at all; by which means it follows that an additional weight is thrown upon the shoulders of the commander-in-chief, to withdraw his attention from the great line of his duty. The gentlemen of the committee, when they were at camp, talked of an expedient for adjusting these matters, which I highly approved and wish to see adopted: namely, that two or three members of the Board of War, or a committee of Congress, should repair immediately to camp, where the best aid can be had, and with the commanding officer, or a committee of his appointment, prepare and digest the most perfect plan that can be devised for correcting all abuses and making new arrangements; considering what is to be done with the weak and debilitated regiments, if the States to which

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they belong will not draft men to fill them, for as to enlisting soldiers it seems to me to be totally out of the question; together with many other things that would occur in the course of such a conference; and, after digesting matters in the best manner they can, to submit the whole to the ultimate determination of Congress.

If this measure is approved, I would earnestly advise the immediate execution of it, and that the commissary-general of purchases, whom I rarely see, may be directed to form magazines without a moment's delay in the neighborhood of this camp, in order to secure provision for us in case of bad weather. The quartermaster-general ought also to be busy in his department. In short, there is as much to be done in preparing for a campaign as in the active part of it. Everything depends upon the preparation that is made in the several departments, and the success or misfortunes of the next campaign will more than probably originate with our activity or supineness during this winter.

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## FAREWELL TO THE ARMY

The United States in Congress assembled, after giving the most honorable testimony to the merits of the federal armies, and presenting them with the thanks of their country for their long, eminent, and faithful services, having thought proper, by their proclamation bearing date the 18th day of October last, to discharge such part of the troops as were engaged for the war, and to permit the officers on furloughs to retire from service, from and after to-morrow; which proclamation having been communicated in the public papers for the information and government of all concerned, it only remains for the commander-in-chief to address himself once more, and that for the last time, to the armies of the United States (however widely dispersed the individuals who composed them may be), and to bid them an affectionate, a long farewell.

But before the commander-in-chief takes his final leave of those he holds most dear, he wishes to indulge himself a few moments in calling to mind a slight review of the past. He will then take the liberty of exploring with his military friends their future prospects, of advising the general line of conduct which, in his opinion, ought to be pursued; and he will conclude the address by expressing the obligations he feels himself under for the spirited and able assistance he has experienced from them, in the performance of an arduous office.

A contemplation of the complete attainment (at a period earlier than could have been expected) of the object for which we contended against so formidable a power, cannot but inspire us with astonishment and gratitude. The dis-

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advantageous circumstances on our part, under which the war was undertaken, can never be forgotten. The singular interpositions of Providence in our feeble condition were such as could scarcely escape the attention of the most unobserving; while the unparalleled perseverance of the armies of the United States, through almost every possible suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years, was little short of a standing miracle.

It is not the meaning nor within the compass of this address to detail the hardships peculiarly incident to our service, or to describe the distresses which in several instances have resulted from the extremes of hunger and nakedness, combined with the rigors of an inclement season; nor is it necessary to dwell on the dark side of our past affairs. Every American officer and soldier must now console himself for any unpleasant circumstances which may have occurred, by a recollection of the uncommon scenes of which he has been called to act no inglorious part, and the astonishing events of which he has been a witness; events which have seldom, if ever before, taken place on the stage of human action nor can they probably ever happen again. For who has before seen a disciplined army formed at once from such raw materials? Who, that was not a witness, could imagine, that the most violent local prejudices would cease so soon; and that men, who came from the different parts of the continent, strongly disposed by the habits of education to despise and quarrel with each other, would instantly become but one patriotic band of brothers? Or who, that was not on the spot, can trace the steps by which such a wonderful revolution has been effected, and such a glorious period put to all our warlike toils?

It is universally acknowledged that the enlarged prospects of happiness, opened by the confirmation of our independence and sovereignty, almost exceed the power of description. And shall not the brave men, who have



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contributed so essentially to these inestimable acquisitions, retiring victorious from the field of war to the field of agriculture, participate in all the blessings which have been obtained? In such a republic, who will exclude them from the rights of citizens, and the fruits of their labor? In such a country, so happily circumstanced, the pursuits of commerce and the cultivation of the soil will unfold to industry the certain road to competence. To those hardy soldiers, who are actuated by the spirit of adventure, the fisheries will afford ample and profitable employment; and the extensive and fertile regions of the West will yield a most happy asylum to those who, fond of domestic enjoyment, are seeking for personal independence. Nor is it possible to conceive that any one of the United States will prefer a national bankruptcy, and a dissolution of the Union, to a compliance with the requisitions of Congress, and the payment of its just debts; so that the officers and soldiers may expect considerable assistance, in recommending their civil occupations, from the sums due to them from the public, which must and will most inevitably be paid.

In order to effect this desirable purpose, and to remove the prejudices which may have taken possession of the minds of any of the good people of the States, it is earnestly recommended to all the troops that, with strong attachments to the Union, they should carry with them into civil society the most conciliating dispositions, and that they should prove themselves not less virtuous and useful as citizens than they have been persevering and victorious as soldiers. What though there should be some envious individuals, who are unwilling to pay the debt the public has contracted, or to yield the tribute due to merit; yet let such unworthy treatment produce no invectives, nor any instance of intemperate conduct. Let it be remembered that the unbiased voice of the free citizens of the United States has promised the just re-

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ward and given the merited applause. Let it be known and remembered that the reputation of the federal armies is established beyond the reach of malevolence; and let a consciousness of their achievements and fame still incite the men who composed them to honorable actions; under the persuasion that the private virtues of economy, prudence and industry will not be less amiable in civil life than the more splendid qualities of valor, perseverance and enterprise were in the field. Every one may rest assured that much, very much of the future happiness of the officers and men will depend upon the wise and manly conduct which shall be adopted by them when they are mingled with the great body of the community. And although the general has so frequently given it as his opinion in the most public and explicit manner that, unless the principles of the federal government were properly supported, and the powers of the Union increased, the honor, dignity and justice of the nation would be lost forever; yet he cannot help repeating on this occasion so interesting a sentiment, and leaving it as his last injunction to every officer and every soldier, who may view the subject in the same serious point of light, to add his best endeavors to those of his worthy fellow-citizens toward effecting these great and valuable purposes, on which our very existence as a nation so materially depends.

The commander-in-chief conceives little is now wanting to enable the soldiers to change the military character into that of the citizen, but that steady and decent tenor of behavior which has generally distinguished, not only the army under his immediate command, but the different detachments and separate armies through the course of the war. From their good sense and prudence he anticipates the happiest consequences, and while he congratulates them on the glorious occasion which renders their services in the field no longer necessary, he wishes

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to express the strong obligations he feels himself under for the assistance he has received from every class and in every instance. He presents his thanks in the most serious and affectionate manner to the general officers, as well for their counsel on many interesting occasions, as for their ardor in promoting the success of the plans he had adopted; to the commandants of regiments and corps, and to the other officers, for their great zeal and attention in carrying his orders promptly into execution; to the staff, for their alacrity and exactness in performing the duties of their several departments; and to the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers, for their extraordinary patience and suffering, as well as their invincible fortitude in action. To the various branches of the army the general takes this last and solemn opportunity of professing his inviolable attachment and friendship. He wishes more than bare professions were in his power; that he were really able to be useful to them all in future life. He flatters himself, however, they will do him the justice to believe, that whatever could with propriety be attempted by him has been done.

And being now to conclude these his last public orders, to take his ultimate leave in a short time of the military character, and to bid a final adieu to the armies he has so long had the honor to command, he can only again offer in their behalf his recommendations to their grateful country, and his prayers to the God of armies. May ample justice be done them here, and may the choicest of Heaven's favors, both here and hereafter, attend those who, under the Divine auspices, have secured innumerable blessings for others. With these wishes and his benediction, the commander-in-chief is about to retire from service. The curtain of separation will soon be drawn, and the military scene to him will be closed forever.

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## 'FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Washington was chosen first President of the United States, and at the end of his term he was again chosen. When his second term drew near its close, he refused to be a candidate for reelection, and six months before he was to leave the President's chair he issued the following farewell address, September 17, 1796.

### FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

The period for a new election of a citizen, to administer the executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, specially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured, that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that, in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest; no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that

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retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety; and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that, in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust I will only say that I have with good intentions contributed toward the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious in the outset of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied that, if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more

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for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guaranty of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments, which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your

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felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of government, which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee that from different causes and from different quarters much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common coun-

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try, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of America, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole.

The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The South in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the North, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the North, it finds its particular navigation invigorated; and, while it contributes in different ways to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength, to which itself is unequally adapted. The East, in a like intercourse with the West, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications by land and water will more and more find, a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home. The West derives from the East supplies requisite to its growth and comfort, and, what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it



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must of necessity owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one nation. Any other tenure by which the West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations, and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries not tied together by the same governments; which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere? Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal. We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. It is well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to union,

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affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as a matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart-burnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head; they have seen, in the negotiation by the executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the senate, of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the general government and in the Atlantic States unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi; they have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain and that with Spain, which secure to them everything they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the Union by which they were procured? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens?

To the efficacy and permanency of your union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliances, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times

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have experienced. Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a constitution of government better calculated than your former for an intimate union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true Liberty. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of fashion, rather than the organs of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become

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potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government; destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the constitution, alterations, which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes, upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion; and remember, especially, that, for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discrimination. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, generally.

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This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continued mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils, and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the doors to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion, that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This within certain limits is probably true, and in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural

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tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution, in those intrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern, some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for, though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of

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men and citizens. The mere politician equally with the pious man ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who, that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is, to use it as sparingly as possible; avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertion in time of peace to discharge the debts, which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should co-operate. To facilitate to them the performance of their duty it is essential that you should practically bear in mind, that towards the payment of debts there

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must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes; that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant; that the intrinsic embarrassment, inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties), ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining revenue which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages, which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by



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ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations has been the victim.

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions, by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation), facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practise the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens), the jealousy of

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a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defence against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality, we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of

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Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing with powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them, conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view, that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that, by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of

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an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But, if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

How far in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe, my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1793, is the index of my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice, and by that of your Representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it, with moderation, perseverance and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct, it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe, that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in

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which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it, which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize, without alloy, the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow-citizens, the benign influence of good laws under a free government, the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors, and dangers.

GEORGE WASHINGTON



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